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INTERNATIONAL BLACK MARKET

THE American decision to decontrol food prices and to stop bulk purchases of food by the Administration is as ruthless and anarchic an action as the sudden withdrawal of Lease-Lend at the end of the war. It is a deadly blow at the hopes of orderly marketing of the American food surplus on which a hungry world relies. And this decision coincides with a sudden reversal of American policy towards the World Food Board. Intelligent observers never believed that political agreement between Russia and the West would be easily achieved; the most promising line of advance (as this journal has not been alone in urging) is co-operation between the great Powers in practical matters, especially in raising the standard of living of the world and preventing those sudden booms and slumps which are a main underlying cause of world conflicts. Therefore the most important of these international "functional bodies" was the organisation set up to deal with food and agriculture. This week, at a single blow, Sir John Orr's plan for the World Food Board is threatened by a cynical American betrayal of her own pledges at Copenhagen.

Only a month ago, Maurice Dodd, Under-Secretary for Agriculture and leader of the U.S. delegation, stood unequivocally at the Copenhagen Conference in support of Sir John Orr's aims, and demanded that a World Food Board Preparatory Commission should be set up to work out the machinery to establish fair prices for farmers and consumers, prevent slumps and abolish famines. Now that this Commission has met, Mr. Dodd has discarded all idea of international authority and declared for "multilateral agreements." There is no mystery about this change of front: the State Department has been bitterly opposed to Sir John Orr's plan, but as long as Henry Wallace was Secretary for Commerce, his own enlightened views prevailed in the Cabinet. The American delegation returned home to find the State Department triumphant, and Mr. Dodd has now been made to toe the line of dollar diplomacy. Mr. Harold Wilson, leader of the British Delegation on the Commission, has countered by insisting on a supernational authority and an "ever normal granary" with a system of buffer stocks. This British stand keeps the Commission in being, but no World Board could function without the U.S.

The immediate effects of Washington's action may be as spectacular as its long-term results must be disastrous. The withdrawal of the U.S. Government's purchasing means that consumer countries will have to huxter with private interests. The countries at present helped by Unrra are without the currency to compete in the open market, and some, under the political sanction of "loans only to our friends," will face starvation. Indeed it is difficult to see how the International Emergency Food Council, which allocates world supplies, can function at all effectively if the U.S. Government cannot allocate its own supplies. General famine in India has been barely averted; the threat will be at once renewed. In face of this blow to any kind of world order, and with this renewed threat to the hungry countries, the effects of American action on Britain are of secondary importance. But the Government will be faced with a disturbing increase in the price of food imports; bread rationing will certainly be prolonged; and, unless the United States changes it mind, Britain will have to pay more for the food on which we now spend millions of dollars for our Zone in Germany.

The United States, in its mad rush back to a purely selfish capitalism, has apparently decided to walk out of "functional" internationalism, just as it walked out of the political League after the First World War. Whether anything can be saved from this wreckage depends to some extent on Mr. Bevin. He now finds himself willy-nilly in that middle position between American business and Soviet Communism which his critics have urged him boldly to occupy. Mr. Churchill's object appears to be to induce this country to lead the anti-Soviet crusade which is already being so wildly advocated in the United States. Unlike Mr. Churchill, Mr. Bevin is now in the responsible position. He must cease to describe as Communists all those critics who urge that Britain has a peculiar contribution to make to world peace, and one which demands co-operation with Russia, and not only America. It is clear that on the matters that most affect Britain today, the United States is nearly as hostile to the aspirations of Socialist Britain as to the Soviet Union. In private, if not in public, Mr. Bevin's first efforts must be to to restore the economic co-operation between the nations; if he finds that the State Department's victory is absolute, he will have to look elsewhere for friends.

Economics and politics are inextricably blended. The case of Germany will be the sharpest and most immediate example. While American business wishes to exploit the Western Zone in its own interests and with the co-operation of the most reactionary forces in Germany, Stalin still stands, as he made clear in his speech, for a unitary Reich. For the first time he categorically states that the standard of production in Germany must be raised; that her industry should be more fully developed than past agreements under Potsdam have permitted; and that Germans should be given a better chance to support themselves. Stalin emphasises that the unitary Germany which he desires must be "democratic," and it is known that he opposes the federal solution suggested by Great Britain. If by "democratic" Stalin means that he opposes any form of unitary Reich unless it is Communist, agreement will be impossible. But if Soviet Russia no longer believes that Britain is a mere satellite of the United States, and that we are prepared for the large measure of Socialism in Germany which Mr. Bevin has now promised, there may still be some hope of agreement. In any case Mr. Bevin should put up a Socialist plan which Stalin can accept if he sincerely desires to avoid the dangers of partition.

British plans, we believe, have long included an international Ruhr under the control of a Board representing all the four occupying Powers as well as Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. The American "private enterprise" solution for Germany would be bitterly opposed both by the Right and the Left in France, which fears above everything a revival of German nationalism. But an international Socialist plan could hardly be rejected by the French, and it would seem that here Mr. Bevin has a peculiarly good opportunity of showing that Britain is still capable of such an initiative. That this is expected of him by his own followers is made abundantly clear by the fact that at last week's Trades Union Congress, despite the unprecedented intervention of Mr. Attlee as a "fraternal delegate," there was a 40 per cent minority vote for a resolution condemning the record of the Labour Government's foreign policy up to date.

Britain and Egypt

Sidky Pasha's visit to London has ended badly. On his return to Cairo the Egyptian Prime Minister, acutely conscious that his position in his own country rests entirely on his claim to be the man best able to get good terms from Britain, announced that he had "succeeded," and that it has been "definitely decided to achieve unity between Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian Crown." This statement was described next day by Mr. Attlee as "partial and misleading": the purely exploratory talks in London had been conducted on the understanding that they did not commit either Government and should be treated as confidential; and no change in the existing *status quo* and administration of the Sudan was contemplated. An article which we print this week on a later page examines a case for the "Unity of the Nile" which has become a popular cry in Egypt. This week's demonstrations organised by the Sudanese Umma (Nationalist) Party in Omdurman underline the strength of Sudanese sentiment in favour, not so much of continuance of the present Condominium, as of complete independence. It may be that in the course of Sidky Pasha's talks in London a formula was discussed which would emphasise King Farouk's present titular sovereignty over the Sudan without prejudice either to the existing joint Anglo-Egyptian administration or the Sudan's future right to secede. The sooner the confusion which now surrounds the outcome of the London conversations is cleared up the better. Even without this misunderstanding, the precariousness of good Anglo-Egyptian relations is illustrated by the attack delivered this week in the U.N. Assembly on the presence of British troops by Hussein Pasha, the leader of the Egyptian delegation.

Bulgaria Polls

The results of the elections held last Sunday in Bulgaria for a Constituent Assembly, whose task it will be to replace the Tirnovo Constitution, are a sweeping victory not merely for the Fatherland Front, but for the Bulgarian Communist Party. The electoral system enabled the supporters of the Fatherland Front to record their votes for each of its constituent parties; and in a remarkably heavy poll the Front, consisting of Communists, Agrarians, Socialists, and the Zveno Party, secured approximately 3 million votes out of a total of 4,200,000 cast. In the new Assembly the Communists, who received nearly 2,300,000 votes, will hold 277 seats, the Agrarians 64 seats, and the Socialists and Zveno 23 seats between them. The two Opposition Parties, the dissident Agrarians and Social-Democrats, who campaigned in the election as a single group, will hold 101 seats. Reports from observers indicate that the election was quiet and orderly; and in a directive speech made to the Communists at the beginning of the campaign, M. Dimitrov insisted that the Communist-controlled militia must not intervene in any way in the voting. Whether the British Foreign Office, which has delivered yet another Note in Bucharest protesting against lack of freedom in the arrangements for the forthcoming Rumanian elections, will be satisfied with the validity of the Bulgarian polling, is doubtful. Making full allowance, however, for the fact that the highly organised Communist Party made the most of its advantages in permitted propaganda during the electoral campaign, the actual voting was by all accounts free, and the results seem to show that the majority of Bulgarians are willing for the reconstruction of their country to be carried through under Communist leadership, on the lines of the Fatherland Front programme.

Left Unity in Italy

All this year, the Right Wing of the Italian Socialist Party, led by Silone and Saragat, has been conducting a campaign against the Communists, and inside their own party, against Nenni, the Foreign Minister, who has been the chief Socialist advocate of a united front between the two working-class parties. But they have not managed to frustrate the signature of a new pact of Socialist-Communist unity last Sunday, to replace that drawn up in 1943, which was no longer effective. The fresh agreement sets out a comprehensive short-term programme on which the two parties are agreed—including nationalisation, agrarian reform, social legislation and increased production. It also stipulates the practical means by which the pact is to be carried out. Apart from regular meetings of a co-ordinating committee formed by three leaders of each party, there is to be joint action by Socialist and Communist Ministers in the Cabinet and a common programme for the next election. Local election candidates are to run on a joint list, though each party will retain its own candidates in national and trade union contests. If this new agreement works effectively, it will do a great deal to ensure stability in Italy, which now faces the combined dangers of runaway inflation, a nation-wide black market, malcontent ex-Partisans, Vatican-led reaction and the semi-Fascism of *Uomo-Qualunquists*.

Deported German Technicians

The Russians have themselves largely to blame if a fuss, which they regard as disproportionate, has been raised in Britain and the United States about the removal to the U.S.S.R. from German factories in the Russian Zone of experts and technicians in radar, jet propulsion and the manufacture of precision instruments and optics. It is true that comparable enforced deportations have been carried out, as the Russians retort, by all three Western Powers: experts have been expatriated for "interrogation," though in the case of Britain the facts would seem to be that few have been retained for work outside Germany save with their consent and on a contractual basis. How far the experts and technicians taken to work in the U.S.S.R. went voluntarily is not yet clear, and there is considerable uncertainty as to the numbers involved. The Russians, in fact, have surrounded this operation with their customary secrecy; and this, coupled with the fact that removal to the U.S.S.R. means working in many cases in remote areas at vast distances from Germany has not unnaturally created concern in Western Europe and America. This concern has been very fully exploited by newspapers, which have complained little in the past about the conscription of German labour by the occupying Powers.

Domestic Issues at the T.U.C.

Apart from the political debates which took the limelight at the Trades Union Congress, and the "closed shop" discussion, on which we commented last week, the most important questions before the delegates were the forty-hour week and trade union wage policy. Congress took a sensible line on the shorter working week, reaffirming the demand as a matter of principle, but clearly recognising the difficulty of giving immediate effect to it in face of the man-power shortage and the arrears of capital maintenance. The trade unions, in fact, have made it clear that the coming re-equipment of industry with both buildings and machinery must be done on the assumption that the maximum normal week will be one of forty hours, which is reasonable and practicable. Though the demand for an overall wages policy was again turned down, the minority in favour of it is getting bigger, and in the end the trade unions are bound to change their minds—as they did over family allowances after opposing them year after year almost to the last. Congress also went on record against any immediate attempt to draw up a revised cost-of-living index, which is connected with the question of wage policy, for, whereas the present index is so clearly wrong as to carry no weight, the existence of a more correct index might be, in practice, a long step towards a general attempt to base wages upon it.

The Profit Motive

Mr. Morrison told his audience at Birmingham last week-end that the Government has no desire to "abolish the profit motive," but is setting out only to prevent its abuse. As a statement of immediate policy this is obvious; for it follows directly from the fact that the Government is proposing to nationalise only a small number of industries and to leave the great majority under private ownership and control. What Mr. Morrison was in effect saying was that the profit motive must no longer be allowed to act restrictively, though it is still needed to fulfil its classical function as a spur to higher production. The acceptance of "full employment" involves that total production shall be limited only by total production capacity, but leaves the decision as to what is to be produced, over a large part of the field, to be settled by the profit-expectations of business firms. This policy of overall planning for full employment will not, however, work unless an end is made to the pursuance by cartels and other kinds of monopoly of devices deliberately designed to restrict output in order to maintain profit-margins. It implies both effective measures to control monopoly practices, and some framework of industrial organisation that will make private industry directly responsive to the requirements of a general planning of the level of investment and the distribution of man-power to suit essential needs. It also implies, as Mr. Morrison hinted, labour participation in decisions on industrial policy, in order not only to avoid exploitation but to recognise that the attitude of the workers to production is fully as vital a matter as the attitude of owners or managers

The Monopolists' Prayer

Mr. Morrison's remarks give piquancy to the manifesto issued last week by the Federation of British Industries, which is saying almost exactly the opposite. The Federation of British Industries has come out with a demand that can most appropriately be described as plain cheek. In the reports which are now coming in from Sir Stafford Cripps's Working Parties there are proposals for various kinds of permanent organisations to advise about the problems of the industries concerned, and in most cases to undertake some executive function. In face of these reports, which provide for representation of trade unions as well as of employers, and in some cases for representation of the public in addition, the F.B.I.—unanimously, we are told—recommends that "the Government should give official recognition to efficient trade associations and normally use them, and them alone, in dealing with the affairs of their industry as a whole." Thus, the F.B.I. seeks to sweep both the trade unions and any one else except the monopolist trade associations out of the picture, and to tie the Government down to dealing exclusively with the monopolists. No doubt the report goes on to say that the trade associations ought to arrange to meet the trade unions for consultation, and to admit that "advisory or consultative councils may sometimes be necessary," but it says that when such councils are framed they should consider "only broad questions," and should be given no executive powers. Finally, it demands that no "statutory industry board" be set up without a special Act of Parliament—special to each case. Obviously, it is most unlikely that the Government will accept these monstrous suggestions, or that the F.B.I. has any expectation of them being accepted. The report looks more like an incitement to employers to boycott any councils or boards that the Government may seek to set up with representation of either the trade unions or the public. Here again we see capitalist reaction girding up

its loins to fight after its momentary retreat following last year's General Election.

Reform In Cyprus

Cyprus has been riddled with discontent for many years, and for a generation the relationship between the people and the British Colonial Government has been steadily deteriorating. Since 1931, when Government House was burnt down over the head of Sir Ronald Storrs, the constitution has been in suspense; stringent laws regarding freedom of expression and association have been clamped down on a politically virile population; the Church has been forbidden the free choice of its bishops, and many leaders have been in exile or in prison. This political oppression, coupled with the economic stagnation which marked British colonial policy until recently, has bred an increasing demand to sever the link with the British Empire and unite with Greece. The British Government has now taken steps to ease this unhappy situation. One of the first acts of the new Colonial Secretary was to announce that the eighteen trade unionists serving sentences for political agitation would be released. This was followed by the announcement that Cyprus is to have a new constitution, not imposed by London, but to be discussed by a special Consultative Assembly of representative Cypriots. This is to be linked with a ten-year economic development plan to cost £6 millions. At the same time the laws preventing the free election of a new archbishop are to be repealed and the persons deported from Cyprus for their part in the 1931 disturbances will be permitted to return. A new Governor, Lord Winster, is to carry out the new policy. We should not be surprised that there is no immediate, enthusiastic response from Cypriot politicians. They have built up their movement on the cry of "Enosis" (union with Greece), as much as a symbol of dislike for the existing British regime, as of a considered opinion regarding the practicalities of their demand or the benefits it would bring to the ordinary people. If after a few years of free government and economic planning the people still feel that "Enosis" is the ideal, Britain will then have no excuse for imposing a Commonwealth relationship on people who do not want it.

Scientific "Conchies"

Sir Henry Dale has aroused something of a storm through his forthright demand, at a scientific convention in America, that universities should bind themselves never to accept contracts for research from the State or industry unless they are allowed to tell the results to the world. Some see in this a policy of unilateral disarmament on the part of the scientists, and Sir Robert Renwick, formerly lay-chief of radar development for the Ministry of Aircraft Production, has attacked Dale as a "dangerous man," and has accused him of suggesting that the scientists should override Governments and imperil the safety of nations. Dale is not suggesting anything of the kind; he is suggesting that universities, as the fountains of pure research, should insist on the dissemination of the knowledge they obtain. That is in accord with the Truman-Attlee-King Declaration and with the American proposals for the Atomic Development Administration. What he is demanding is that the universities should not betray their principles by accepting secret contracts from Governments and should abjure the practice, all too common, by which university professors hire the resources of their laboratories to industries for secret trade-researches. Military research should be left to Government defence laboratories which recruit scientists who accept the restrictions of official secrecy, leaving their academic brethren to their consciences and to exercise their freedom as members of a supra-national Commonwealth of Knowledge. Dale's demands should have the support not only of the scientific world but of all right-thinking men. Scientific secrecy is a scientific heresy.

PARLIAMENT: The Press

Wednesday.

"One does not become a Pericles merely by becoming a Member of this House," said Beverley Baxter in the debate on the press. After he had illustrated this sentence of his own speech, the discussion recovered the dash with which Haydn Davies had begun it.

An advantage for the movers of the motion lay in their conspicuously greater knowledge of the processes of journalism and the structure of the newspaper industry than, with a few exceptions, the opposers possessed. Like Ecclesiastes' war-horse who, sniffing and hearing the battle, cried, "Ha! Ha! the trumpets!", the Labour journalists charged. Haydn Davies combined attack with documentation, ease with knowledge, ardour with good-humour and first-night enthusiasm with a year's Parliamentary experience.

Michael Foot belaboured the press Lords with familiar effect. His chief claim was that they had reduced numbers of their editors in the last thirty years to the status of "stooges, cyphers and sycophants." The Opposition reply lacked the bugle-tones which one might have expected from those who had tried to twist the motion into an onslaught on press-liberty. Instead, the House heard Maxwell Fyfe uncomfortably interpreting a legalistic brief, with a chill peroration on the familiar "totalitarian" theme. A general judgment was that Fyfe must have done better at Nuremberg.

The debate was temperate in language, and the critics of monopoly tendencies factual. W. J. Brown, who "would not trust a Government of which the present Lord President is a prominent member," struck the high moral note which he always endeavours to strike in Debate. As he spoke, ghostly attendants marched in to hand him on a platter his King Charles' head—the Closed Shop—which he waved at his artless listeners. Thurtle of Shoreditch, who described himself as "only a journalist in a very modest way," was not second to Brown in defending the freedom of the press against the National Union of Journalists. He was not there, he said, to defend Lord Beaverbrook. From his speech, however, it seems evident that Thurtle is happy in representing what he calls the "Labour Point of View" in the *Sunday Express*. (Let it be added that a curious by-product of the debate was that Beaverbrook emerged from it as a most agreeable character.)

Thurtle voted for the Motion, among other reasons, because he feared that the day might come when men and women might be compelled to go to the altar with a year's subscription to the *Daily Herald*. Douglas Jay, on the other hand, thanked God for the *Daily Herald*, and voted with the "Noes," among other reasons, because the *Daily Herald* was always there to frustrate naughty monopolists. He was one of the very few Labour Members to fall into the error that the Motion was designed as a safeguard against mistaken newspaper opinion, rather than against newspaper abuses.

The best speech against the Motion came from Wilson Harris, who spoke with moderation and wit. It served as an effective counter to Tom Driberg who had preceded him with a speech of wit and moderation. Maude, K.C., was not at his most effective in winding up; in other words, he tried to debate rather than to act.

Members who had settled back to enjoy a repeat performance of his Friendly Society pathos when he had shaken the conscience of some Labour M.P.s, were dismayed by a somewhat flippant argument, only relieved by an anecdote which he borrowed from a previous Labour speaker. But the debate was not to end in a fizzle. First Morrison, then Maurice Webb, gave the House an impressive demonstration of Front and Back Bench in best parliamentary form. The Lord President with a deftness that aroused the admiring envy of the followers, turned the table of the Attorney General's apology to Lord Kemsley by taunting Lord Kemsley for his thin skin in rushing to the shelter of a libel action. Maurice Webb ended the debate with a forthright convincing speech which gave the history of the Motion. It was carried on the floor of the House, as well as in the lobbies.

PHINEAS MINOR

WHY NOT DISARMAMENT?

Does Stalin's latest pronouncement on control of the atom-bomb open the way to a realistic approach to one of the central issues of peace which we have so far dodged? We have disarmed our enemies but we have yet to disarm ourselves. Mr. Churchill—with his dramatic question about the "two hundred Russian divisions" quartered in Eastern Europe—has focussed our attention on another phase of this problem that may be as anxious and as urgent. Two years ago we were tracing on our maps the forward march of these same divisions, and we were disturbed only when it was impeded. Today it is possible for the Premier of those days to assume as something self-evident that the presence of these big Russian forces in the lands they liberated is a reason why we should delay our own demobilisation. With conscious art this insatiable veteran—"incendiary of the new war" is Stalin's phrase—forced us to recall his timely warnings against Nazi rearmament, and went on to invite the Government to form with the Opposition what is in effect a *union sacrée* against this Russian peril. That is the meaning of his stress on "continuity" in foreign policy and that also is the obvious interpretation of the "bi-partisan" policy to which both American parties are committed. When, on the next day, Mr. Attlee in his address to the Trades Union Congress went out of his way to attack Communism and admonish Russia, Mr. Churchill must have congratulated himself on the prompt response of all the leading parties of the English-speaking peoples to his appeal at Fulton for a common front. That the Russians and their allies have hastened this development by their reckless disregard for Western susceptibilities is irrelevant. It is no longer an ideological antagonism that concerns us: we are now at the stage of counting up divisions. To go on repeating the commonplace that neither side wishes for war is irresponsible laziness. When things have reached this pass, the choice lies between a showdown and a reconciliation.

Where, then, are we to begin? This business of the two hundred divisions points the way. Stalin has now stated that the true number is sixty, and that the majority are not at full strength. It is reasonable to suppose that neither in equipment nor in transport facilities are they on a war footing; and that one of Russia's reasons for maintaining even sixty divisions west of the U.S.S.R. is that it is easier to feed and house them there than in her own devastated territories. But the main reason is her sense of insecurity as she faces the atomic armament of the Americans, their encircling ring of airfield bases and the economic pressure to which they are subjecting the members of the Slav Bloc. Russia is planning defence in depth on a great scale, but if the Americans were to make a Hiroshima of Moscow, these armies could retaliate by striking westwards. To drop atom bombs on Russia, as Mr. Wallace pointed out in his letter to Mr. Truman, could only lead to a situation in which America would find it a military necessity to complete the destruction of all Europe. The German problem is nearly insoluble, because it is primarily strategical. It will remain insoluble until in one way or another we abolish this sense of insecurity. No one is deceived by the polite fiction that four Powers are maintaining their mighty armies of occupation in order to hold the Germans and Austrians down. These disarmed and dejected populations are absorbed in their anxieties over food and shelter; the reorganised police, with a few mobile contingents of Allied troops to back them, should be capable of maintaining order. The function of the Allied armies today is to watch one another. So long as we

stage this pageant of suspicion in the heart of Europe, there can be no growth of confidence between Russia and the West.

To define the pre-condition for the creation of confidence merely as disarmament would sound like mockery. There is only one sure way of avoiding another major war, and that is by a prompt and uncompromising advance to World Government: to its central Authority all military power would have to be transferred, apart from the lightly-armed forces required for the maintenance of internal order. Whether the Americans are ready for such a sacrifice of national sovereignty is doubtful, but certainly the Russians are not. They cling to their veto; they reject international inspection; they dare not trust themselves, even in matters of external policy, to a majority vote of the United Nations. A happy and fruitful experience of the benefits of co-operation on functional lines in the economic field might gradually break down their distrust, but that is a long-term calculation. Then is there no shorter way of engendering confidence?

Mr. Attlee has indicated that, as matters stand, Britain's commitments preclude our reaching the planned demobilisation target set for the end of 1946. This attitude invites a retaliatory slowing up of Russian demobilisation. Stalin, however, has announced that the hoped for rate of demobilisation in the U.S.S.R. will reduce the strength of Russian forces in eastern Europe to forty divisions by the end of the year. We should like to see this announcement reciprocated by a British decision to make a comparable reduction in the strength of our garrisons on foreign soil within the same time limit, and to propose in the U.N. Assembly a drastic and general measure of all-round disarmament. Mr. Molotov's speech on Tuesday, however intractable on some points, did at least invite the opening of such discussions.

If we ask what a drastic and general measure of disarmament should involve, Henry Wallace made in his New York speech suggestions that give some idea of its scope. He laid it down first of all that weapons of mass destruction should be eliminated from our national armaments—atomic bombs, rockets and bombing planes. He then proposed that the costs of defence should be limited to 15 per cent. of each national budget. The present level is said to be round about 33 per cent. for the U.S.A., 24 per cent. for the U.S.S.R., and 30 per cent. for the U.K. There are notorious difficulties in applying a financial yardstick to defence as a whole, since national budgets are never strictly comparable and some Powers must specialise in the more costly arms, notably navies. But the general sense of Mr. Wallace's proposal is clear enough: it means a reduction in our present peacetime standards by about one half. It should not pass the wit of man to devise methods by which this might be carried out with fairness to all, though the experience of the futile and interminable debates at Geneva warns us that it will not be an easy task. There is and should be no finality in stopping short at any arbitrary percentage in our reduction. The reason for stopping short of total disarmament is that not all of us are ready for the immense adventure of creating a genuine World Federation, with a standing World Guard to which all of us would entrust our safety. What is possible today is a limitation of national armaments so drastic that it would banish the current fear of war.

The thing will be done only if the average citizen recoils from the abyss towards which Mr. Churchill is hurrying us. Governments will find the courage to attempt the new approach when the masses find a way of declaring their will that there shall be no Third World War. The average man is passive today because he is bewildered by the perplexity of the problem. He has no illusions about Uno, but he does not see how to turn it into a reality. He cannot grasp the psychology of the Russians, who contrive with a fatal consistency to alienate his sympathies. He does not welcome American leadership. He dreads the atomic bomb, but how to ensure his own survival and his children's he does not know. The attraction of a demand for general disarmament is that it is simple and direct. It is deeply rooted in American traditions and twice since the Revolution the Russians have proposed it. If the Labour Government would take the lead in advocating it with all their resources of publicity and persuasion, they could reckon on a world-wide response.

U.S. ELECTION ISSUES

Political prophets, Gallup pollsters and party organisers seem agreed that the American elections next week will go against President Truman's Administration. The whole House of Representatives, one-third of the Senate, as well as many State Officers, are up for election. If the Republicans could win 26 seats in the House and nine in the Senate they would control both Houses of Congress. This would entitle them to "organise" the Committees, i.e. appoint their own Chairman and through the appointment of their own Speaker in the House decide which Bills shall be dealt with by which Committees. In brief, the Republicans would control the legislative branch of the American Government, though Mr. Truman would remain in charge of the Executive Branch. The chances seem to be that the Republicans will gain control of the House, but are less likely to control the Senate.

The issues of the election as stated in the Party Pamphlets bear no relation to the issues on which the people will vote. The Democrats stand for "a better and fuller life for all our people," against "selfish exploitation of the many for the few." The Republicans with striking originality favour "constitutional government" and "individual rights," against a "Socialist economy."

Truth, beauty and goodness *versus* Faith, Hope and Charity are never the real subject of political action. A people votes on its stomach, and the American stomach, though still the best filled in the world, was deprived of red meat for the first two months of this election campaign. Meat therefore became the central issue of the campaign. The two favourite Republican slogans, splashed on every billboard, were "Who made you vegetarian?" and the doubled-edged "Had enough? Vote Republican." The pressure on this issue became so strong that President Truman made his now celebrated surrender and removed the price controls on meat. Even this has failed as a political manoeuvre, since those who most strongly opposed the meat profiteers cannot applaud Truman for his defeat at their hands, while those who always favoured decontrol despise the President for seeing the light so late.

The Democratic Party is bearing the brunt of all the post-war troubles. Shortages, strikes, high prices, lowered take-home wages, all these are laid at the White House door. In reply the Democrats speak with differing voices. The Administration at first spoke of the need for some government controls of prices, labour and wages during the reconversion from war mobilisation; but a large number of the Democratic candidates repudiated the whole stabilisation programme. It is typical of the present high direction of the Party that, when the heretics seemed to be gaining in popularity, the champions of orthodoxy changed their creed and joined them. Yet the Stock Market, which does not base its predictions on Gallup Polls, continues to fall, and no one attempts to solve the nation's economic problems. No solution is popular.

Mr. Byrnes' foreign policy *is* popular in America. Of that there can be no doubt. But foreign policy is not an overt issue in the election, since the bi-partisan policy is a product of the joint wisdom of a Democratic Secretary of State and a Republican Senator. But there is much whispering in Republican circles that Senator Vandenberg is the real author of the popular creed of being tough with Russia. Mr. Wallace, said to have resigned because, say the Republicans, he wanted "to be soft with Russia," is a Democrat, and he still taints the party with Redness. In spite of Mr. Byrnes' efforts to convince the world he has no soft spot for Russia, only Mr. Molotov seems fully convinced; the Republicans still accuse his party of being Communist dominated.

The Red Scare is, in fact, being used to its full. In Massachusetts Martha Sharp, who is running against the Republican's potential Speaker—Joe Martin—has been accused of Communist affiliations because she received a decoration for Relief work from the Czech Government. The whole campaign against Mr. De Lacy in Seattle is based on the charge that he is a "fellow traveller," and the outcome of that election will signify how dangerous the Red smear is. It is typical of the rearguard action which the Democrats are fighting in this election, that they have had to repudiate some of their own candidates because of their alleged Communist sympathies.

What the American people are witnessing today is the Decline and Fall of the Roosevelt Empire. That great politician was able to hold together the diversities of the Democratic Party, composed of the reactionary South allied to the progressive West and to the proletariat of the Cities organised by the Political Action Committee and the Party Bosses. Truman has been able to hold the South (which votes "Democratic" but opposes all his measures) and the City Bosses, such as Kelly of Chicago and Hague of Jersey City. The West has been losing its enthusiasm, and the Political Action Committee is neither more nor less pro-Truman than Henry Wallace is. They would have voted Democratic if Wallace had been in the Cabinet; since he left they will not vote in mass at all.

Much of the electorate is apathetic, feeling that it has only a choice between two evils. Yet to the careful observer there is much at stake. Henry Wallace, shortly before he left the Cabinet, wrote: "I have always contended, and the votes in Congress prove, that on most issues involving the general welfare the majority of Democrats vote right and the majority of Republicans vote wrong. It is equally true that in most primary elections progressive Democrats win and progressive Republicans lose." It remains a fact that in spite of all the failures of the Truman regime the Democratic Party is the only home for progressives at present. The spectacular expulsion of Wallace from the Cabinet (but not the Party) has been paralleled by scores of purges within Republican ranks of such mild progressives as Charles La Follette of Indiana, or Augustus Bennet of New York. In the primaries the Democrats replaced the isolationist-reactionary Burton Wheeler with Leif Erickson as their candidate for Senator in Montana. Donart of Idaho and Sparkman of Alabama are other new progressive recruits to the Democratic team.

A Republican Victory in November will improve nothing in the Truman Administration, but will only strengthen those policies which progressives in America and elsewhere find distasteful. For the past 18 months the President has been unable to pass his measures through Congress (the British Loan was almost the only major Administration Bill passed by the 79th Congress). That situation will be perpetuated, with a fair chance that now Congress will even be able to pass its own measures over the President's veto. At this critical moment, therefore, we may expect the United States Executive to be unable to control its internal or external economic policy. In particular, it is almost impossible to suppose that the Administration could pass through a Republican House the International Trade Proposals, calling for American tariff reduction, which it is now putting forward in London. It is a bleak outlook, and there seems no reason to hope that in 1948 the situation will be bettered. If the Republicans think they can win the Presidential election with ease they will nominate a candidate who appeals to the old guard, not to the people.

A SCANDINAVIAN DIARY

EVERY now and again you discover that the post-war scientific world of luxury, so often pictured, has actually arrived—occasionally, for a few people. It is easier and much more comfortable to pop over for the week-end to Scandinavia by air than to make the crowded return journey to Manchester. Of course you may get held up for a couple of hours on the way there, as we did, by some obscure mechanical fault, or for half a day or more, as we were, by bad weather on the return journey. But the week-end itself goes as smoothly as a travel advertisement. Both the Swedish Skymaster and the British Viking, which took us there and back, were as shining and metallic and well-upholstered as the pretty posters suggest. The hostesses who serve you with every luxury, including admirable meals at regular intervals, are as charming and efficient as supers in a movie. The Customs treat you with the respect every traveller feels he deserves and does not receive at Dover or Calais; there is no haste; there are no queues; there are not too many travellers. The officials behave for all the world as if their clients were all ladies and gentlemen. One can even discuss the details of the journey at the highest level. I like meeting my pilot face to face when we reach the bar.

* * *

The same happy feeling of an uncrowded and sane world remains with you after your arrival in Scandinavia. But if you congratulate your hosts on a country in which people seem not to be pushing and pulling at the doors of life, but instead quietly enjoying each other's society, they may reply that, though appreciative of their advantages in not being a great Power, they feel rather "out of the world" and fear that they are excessively "provincial." Only an Englishman, I was told, after addressing a meeting of more than 800 students in Oslo, can give a "general picture" of the world; and the same thing was said to me after a discussion with some 40 students of international affairs at Gothenburg. Here is a provoking contrast: on the one hand the citizen from a world empire, delighted with the serenity of the small nation; on the other, the inhabitants of the small nation complaining of being in a backwater. On a long view, if we ever achieve One World, I do not believe that most people will want to worry much about "world affairs"; they must do so now because war remains a haunting fear that affects everyone. Remove that fear and people will prefer the pre-occupations of the small unit and find themselves absorbed, as many now do in Norway, in the prospects of a winter's ski-ing in brilliant sunshine. At any rate the best earnest we have that a decent world is possible is to be found in Scandinavia, where people have not the temperament, passion and artistic sensibility of the Mediterranean, but where they have acquired far more common sense than anywhere else in the world. And, to make the point clear, one must remember that for centuries these Northern peoples plundered and ravaged each other's countries, judging themselves only by their fighting qualities, and seemed to be even less capable of a peaceful and sensible way of life than any other Europeans. If Vikings can become modern Danes and Norwegians, then there is hope for the British—and even, in time, for the Germans.

* * *

Norway, I should say, is about two-thirds back to pre-war standards. Since I was there just over a year ago, the progress, under a capable Social-Democratic Government, has been immense. Nothing then could be seen in a shop window except trumpery articles of wood and paper. Now the shops are reasonably well supplied, and the rations perhaps slightly better than ours in Britain. I was told that the Students' Union meeting at which I spoke marked another step towards the return of old Norwegian customs! The discussion, sustained by the students at a high level, went on till midnight. It was followed by a supper with beer and *schnappes*; I excused myself after one o'clock as I had a train to catch at 7 in the morning. When I left, everyone was getting merry and singing the songs of tradition. I caught my train and found to my surprise a small contingent of students waiting for me on the station platform. They had been drinking and singing all night long, and came to see me off before they went to bed. How they managed to be sober as well as merry I cannot hope to explain. If this is an old Norwegian custom, I wholeheartedly approve of it.

* * *

The train took me very comfortably to the Swedish frontier, where an unexpected difficulty arose. The Swedes, whose currency is now at a high premium, will not take either Norwegian crowns or British pound notes, and would not change either for me at the frontier. And I had nothing else. They were worried that I could not buy lunch on the train. The kindly dining-car attendant was full of apologies, and a Norwegian, travelling with an official status, explained that the Swedes would not change Norwegian money at all, and that it was impossible for a Norwegian nowadays to have a holiday in Sweden unless he made some special arrangement with a Swedish friend. The dining-car attendant returned a few minutes later to make a proposition. He brought me his address. He would be delighted himself to stand me lunch on the train if I would kindly send his wife some illustrated American and British papers. We clinched the bargain, and the lunch was memorable. I only hope I haven't lost his address.

* * *

In spite of their insistence that they are out of world politics, people in Norway and even more in Sweden are extremely alarmed about the danger of war. They know that the North Pole flying route from America to Russia has altered their strategic position, and they fear that America's insistence on taking bases in Iceland and Greenland may be taken as a provocation by the Russians. "It is surely an invitation," said one Norwegian to me, "to the Russians to occupy our northern province of Finmark." One Norwegian journalist complained that the press had suppressed the fact, as he alleged, that Mr. Byrnes had said that America would stay in Iceland whatever the Althing said about the matter. Then there have been the strange stories about rockets, said to be longer-distance V2's, fired from the Russian Zone in Germany into Northern Norway and Sweden. I found that some Scandinavian as well as British officials believed these stories, in spite of the official Swedish report that the farmers, on whose evidence the stories rest, had merely seen a not uncommon fall of meteors. I even heard the fantastic suggestion that the rockets were fired by Russia to intimidate Sweden and so facilitate the Soviet loan!

* * *

This loan will, I gather, in fact, go through the Swedish Parliament in spite of strong opposition. Myrdal, the famous Swedish economist, who is mainly responsible, is the centre of a violent controversy in which he is accused of offering the Russians a bigger credit than the Swedes can afford; more goods than Swedish labour can supply (at least without an unacceptable form of "labour-direction"); of using threats to compel business-men to toe the line, and of not being straight with the public about his plans. Myrdal is a far-sighted and resolute man who believes that Sweden will need Russian trade and Russian good-will. As I heard discussions of his conduct I felt sure that, whatever mistakes he has made, one reason for criticism is that he has shown himself too "pro-Soviet." The upper class in Sweden has throughout been violently anti-Soviet; the Finnish war and the expansion of Russia, particularly in the Baltic States, have intensified this antagonism. One must add that many good Swedish Liberals and Social-Democrats, who are not necessarily anti-Russian at all, share the detestation of the N.K.V.D. and of Russian methods, and that these look more terrifying to Swedes than they do to us, if only because Russia since the war is a next-door neighbour.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Mrs. Stuart Rose.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

In a small Sussex village he recently saw that a sweep described himself as a fluonomist. The man charged ½d. more than the ordinary sweep.—*The Times.*

"I believe democratising industry to be a step in the right direction," added Mr. Bunn, "provided democratic methods and the control of their application remains in the hands of the employers."—*Advertisers' Weekly.*

Key to the Relic Box of wrought iron, deposited in the North central quadruple pier of St. George's Church, Fordington, 4th Sept. 1911, containing:—

(1) Man's skull in bits taken from Saxon pier.
(2) Horse's skull, ditto.
(3) Parchments.
(4) Parish magazine.
(5) Phial of sweetpea seeds.
(6) Gold earrings and silver bracelets.
(7) Vicar's appendix in spirits.

Label attached to a key in St. George's Church, Fordington, Dorchester.

Distinguished looking men, fashionably dressed women and bearded intellectuals mixed in the theatre queue each wearing a small replica of a little man waving his hat and one leg in the air and shouting "Hurrah, it's Butlin's."—*Yorkshire Post.*

GUERNICA

Today, General Franco was presented with the freedom of Guernica, now completely reconstructed, in token of official gratitude.

Madrid, October 24th.

LONG, long ago died the city of Guernica;
Who would recall that yet unpunished crime?
Franco restores the city of Guernica—
There is a time for judgment, but this is not the time,
This is not the time.

Peace after victory in Spain is now completed,
Witness Guernica, the Fascist's corner-stone;
Must they not kneel, who fought and were defeated?
There is a time to condemn and a time to condone,
This is the time to condone.

Dear to democracies the freedom of the nation,
Dearer the boon of economic ties;
False is the ring of moral reprobation,
There is a time for candour and a time for lies,
This is the time for lies.

Loud are the Powers, united in expressing
Half-hearted hate and hollow-sounding threat,
How weak the mighty, their impotence confessing;
There is a time to remember and a time to forget,
This is the time to forget.

Gone and forgotten the horror of Guernica,
See new Guernica, the seal of Franco's fame;
Franco receives the homage of Guernica—
There is a time for honour and a time for shame,
This is the time for shame.

SAGITTARIUS

TARGETS

Planning, Economic and Social

THE "targets" proposed in the previous articles in this series were, first, a satisfactory balance of payments; secondly, a correct allocation of the scarce supply of national manpower; and thirdly, a rapid and well-planned increase in the supplies of consumers' goods, including such durable consumers' goods as houses and furniture, for the home market. To these we must now add the "target" of improved living conditions, not merely in the form of more goods and services, but also in that of a better environment for the enjoyment of the "good life." It is now generally recognised, in theory if not in practice, that we need not only better houses but also better towns and villages; that we need not only to increase industrial output, but also to make the conditions of production less exhausting, nervously as well as muscularly, and less sordid; and that we need to plan both the location of industry and the distribution of population so as to ensure a better social and economic mixture, by preventing undue concentrations of particular kinds of industry in particular areas, and by stopping the erection of one-class housing estates.

All these objectives today command a degree of theoretical recognition that is quite astonishing to anyone who has experienced the opposition to them during the past twenty or thirty years. In theory, they have all become commonplaces to which persons of the most widely differing political opinions subscribe. The gulf, however, between theory and practice yawns all the more ominously for the strides which theory has made; and in many respects the very urgency of our short-term needs threatens to put fresh obstacles in the way of bridging it. When houses must be had quickly at any cost, it is not easy to be nice in insisting that they shall not be put in the wrong places. When there is urgent need to reopen a factory because the consumers at home or abroad are crying out for its products, it is not easy to propose that it shall be pulled down in the interests of better town-planning, or of improved location, and built up new somewhere else—and it is the harder when there is a serious and not quickly superable shortage of both builders and building materials.

The Government, in its New Towns policy, has shown an awareness of the need for a better distribution of population, and especially for dispersal out of our congested towns. It is also doing something, under the Coalition Government's Act, to endeavour to build up new and complementary industries in the Distressed Areas of the inter-war period; and it has promised to introduce very soon the long-overdue measures for the general regulation of land-use. Its intentions are manifestly excellent; but it simply cannot help allowing and even encouraging a good many things which, from the standpoint of their long-run effects, have serious disadvantages. New Towns, even if the local oppositions to them are successfully stood up to and overcome, cannot be expected to account for more than a small proportion of total new house-building; and nothing on earth can stop the erection of a good many permanent, as well as a good many temporary, houses in what are clearly the wrong places from the standpoint of future amenity and better industrial distribution. It cannot possibly be easy to get rid even of the worst temporary houses for quite a long time to come, or to resume pulling down the older slums, unless the costs of building can be quite considerably reduced. Nor can it be easy to get local authorities, at any rate as long as the existing local government structure is allowed to persist, to carry out housing plans with regard to what is best for the nation rather than to what fits in with their own local ideas.

Moreover, in the matter of industrial location, the Government is still armed, outside the specially scheduled areas, with very inadequate powers. This does not matter so much for the time being, because in the short run the Government's powers depend not on the Act but on its control over building permits and supplies of labour and materials. As these controls get weaker—and they are getting at least a little weaker every month—the deficiencies of Mr. Dalton's Act, passed when he was a Coalition Minister, will appear much more plainly; and it will hardly be practicable, without further powers, to prevent a resumption of the inter-war tendency of industries to congregate just where, from the standpoint of either amenity or balanced economy, they are wanted least. This danger will be the greater if the Government, in following up the conclusions of Sir Stafford Cripps's Working Parties, inclines to the grant of a measure of industrial "self-government" without at the same time constructing any central framework of economic control within which the several autonomies of the affected industries are to be developed. We shall not get a sound distribution of either industry or population unless the related problems of town-building and industrial reorganisation are tackled together, not as two quite separate issues, but as two aspects of one and the same policy, requiring co-ordinated control.

No doubt Mr. Herbert Morrison, aided by his "brains trust," is supposed to have his eye on all these matters. But we confess to some doubt whether the new set-up under his direction is well designed for the purpose in view. There has been a very great improvement in the Government's equipment on the statistical side; and that is all to the good, for no Government nowadays can make good bricks without the straw of a competent statistical service. But statistics are one thing, and policy-making another; and it is on the side of policy that we feel our greatest doubts. We feel them because Mr. Morrison's brains trust, in policy matters, apparently consists of a sort of conference of leading officials chosen from the various Departments which it is his task to co-ordinate in their economic doings. These officials may be personally of high excellence; but they will be most unlike officials if they do not carry into their discussions with Mr. Morrison their several Departmental points of view.

Planning, as we understand it, involves something more than the reconciliation and adjustment of a number of Departmental policies: it involves that someone shall be thinking of the wood, while others are thinking of the trees. We are not confident that it is anyone's business, in the present set-up, to think of the wood—anyone's, we mean, except Mr. Morrison's—and we do not see how he can think to good purpose unless he has his own set of non-Departmental advisers to help him think, so that he can make and initiate plans and not merely take the contradictions out of rival Departmental projects. We have cause to remember the pre-war fiasco of the "Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence." Is not Mr. Morrison, as Minister for the co-ordination of economic policy, in danger of running into the same difficulties?

There is also the question, to which we do not know the answer, how the task of co-ordination of the Government's home policy is divided between Mr. Morrison and Mr. Greenwood. We know that Mr. Morrison's sphere is primarily "economic," and Mr. Greenwood's "social." But what does this mean in practice? Which of them deals with housing and with town and country planning? Or is housing "economic," and town and country planning "social"—surely a most pernicious division, if it exists? Economic and social policy are not two separate matters which can be planned for apart from each other and co-ordinated afterwards: they are intricately intertwined. Perhaps, on this score, the arrangements that have been made are all right; but we simply do not know whether they are or not.

The dangers of this divorce are obvious in the country as well as in the town. The great village problem of today is how to produce cheap and abundant food without cheap and abundant labour. This involves, on the one hand, a high degree of mechanical efficiency, in order to keep costs down, and a reasonable assurance to the producer of stable prices, fixed so as to encourage the right types of production and to enable the farmer to plan well ahead. On the other hand, it involves, for the farm workers, not only good wages, but also greatly improved living conditions in the villages, from better houses to infinitely better amenities. For the time being, however, not much can be done to turn these ideals into realities. The plan of short-term production can bear but little resemblance to any sensible long-term plan; and but little can be done to improve amenities until the acute housing shortage has been overtaken. The alienation of good farm land for "development" can and should be stopped, and, one hopes, will be stopped to a great extent under the Government's new Bill regulating land-use. But, for the most part, long-term agricultural policy is bound, for the present, to be a matter of laying plans for the future, rather than of actually doing things now. This does not make it the less important that the plans should be prepared well in advance, and should be carefully related to other forms of economic and social planning.

Summing up, we may say that the "target" for the Government in the field of home policy surveyed in this article cannot at present be set in terms of immediately realisable projects. The essential thing is to create an instrument of government capable of replacing short-term expedients by longer-term measures of social planning as far and as fast as the chance presents itself. Otherwise, the expedients will crystallise into policies that do not make sense or add up to make any coherent social and economic plan. In particular, there is the danger that planning industry by industry on a national scale and planning area by area on a more general basis—in association in the one case with industries aiming at some sort of self-government and in the other with local authorities jealous of one another's claims—may result in sheer contradictions with which, unless they are checked at the outset, Mr. Morrison as co-ordinator may, for all his ability, struggle in vain. In short, the "target" in this reference is to have a target, and not half a dozen, each shot at by a particular Department without any common purpose clearly in view.

THE UNITY OF THE NILE

THE Egyptian claim to the Sudan is usually put forward in the name of Nile valley unity. In point of fact the basin of the Nile is divided between four major political units; a glance at the map shows that Ethiopia and Uganda are essential parts of the Nile system and other powers are concerned too. Technically, the source of the Nile is held to be the Kagera River which rises near Lake Tanganyika, but for practical purposes the southern source of the Nile is Lake Victoria. The East African Plateau supplies a fairly even flow of water throughout the year, but at least half of it disappears in the swamps and marshes of the Sudan owing to seepage and evaporation.

The Ethiopian Highlands supply the Nile with three important tributaries, of which the most important is the Blue Nile which carries the flood waters to Egypt about July. These floods are of tremendous importance to Egyptian agriculture because they supply the water for the system of perennial irrigation which serves about five-sixths of Egypt's cultivated land.

It is obvious that any serious scheme of Nile unity involves bringing Ethiopia and Uganda into close relationship with Egypt and the Sudan. Britain has so far given the basin of the Nile a working unity, since she has exercised a general supervision over the utilisation of Nile water. A completely sovereign and independent Egypt

(instead of the very limited sovereignty she has experienced since 1922) does in fact mean less Nile unity. Egypt is the most populous and most developed of the Nile political units and her claims on the Nile waters have hitherto been paramount. She has a population of about 18 millions and it is increasing rapidly. But the Sudan with its Gezira and other development schemes is on the threshold of a period of agricultural expansion. Uganda's development is also a factor to be taken into consideration in the future utilisation of Nile water.

It is the fear that these two territories, but more especially the Sudan, will require a larger share of the water of the Nile that underlies a good deal of Egyptian thought, and is responsible for the cry of Nile valley unity. As every schoolboy knows, Egypt is the Nile, and this simple fact has not changed. The capacity of Egypt to deal with her growing population pressure, and her chance of improving public health (at the moment the incidence of enervating diseases is alarmingly high) depend upon greater supplies of water and the Nile is the only available source. The extension of the cultivated area (roughly one and a quarter million acres can be added to Egypt's farmland) depends upon getting more water in the critical months before the arrival of the Blue Nile floods. It should be added that there is also the problem of getting rid of surplus water at the time when the floods are exceptionally high.

Measures to increase the volume of water reaching Egypt in the early summer can only be taken outside Egypt, since this can only be attained by the construction of dams at the outlet of Lake Tana in Ethiopia in order to regulate the flow of the Blue Nile, or by canalising a stretch of the Nile in the Sudan so that the present high evaporation rate is reduced. Other possible measures include making Lake Albert in Uganda into a larger reservoir, or building a dam about 150 miles downstream from this Lake, at Nimule. Just as the construction of the Jebel Aulia dam some thirty miles above Khartoum flooded the Nile for a considerable distance above the dam (and displaced some 70,000 Sudanese families, in compensation for which Egypt paid three-quarters of a million pounds to the Sudan), so the proposed Nimule dam would flood the shores of Lake Albert as well as the Semliki valley to the south. This would have considerable significance for both Uganda and the Belgian Congo, since the latter's frontier with Uganda runs through Lake Albert southwards along the Semliki River to Ruwenzori. This admirably illustrates the interdependence of the Nile valley; more water for Egypt involves population displacement some three thousand miles farther up the valley.

Britain's attitude towards the Sudan question is stated to be determined by the interests of the Sudanese. Both Egypt and Britain agreed in the 1936 Treaty that "the welfare of the Sudanese must be a primary consideration in the administration of the territory." Britain's policy in the Sudan has not been as speedy in its effects as admirers of the Soviet system for dealing with primitive peoples would wish.

The record of exploitation in the nineteenth century inevitably left some difficult problems for subsequent administrators. Until the present time we cannot be said to have tackled the basic problems of illiteracy and poverty with either thoroughness or speed. But neither have the Egyptians in their territory. The number of Sudanese who can appreciate the implications of Nile valley unity under Egyptian leadership constitutes only a small fraction of the 6½ million people of the Sudan.

Although it strikes many Egyptians as typical British cant, it is very hard to avoid the conclusion that the Sudanese stand to gain the most by maintaining the British connection. In any union with Egypt they would be very much of a minority. Although Egypt has undeniably close connections with the northern Sudan, she has comparatively little in common with the majority of the Sudanese, who are nomadic pastoralists. The Sudanese would have little to hope for from the force of enlightened public opinion in Egypt. There is a maldistribution of wealth of this latter country that cannot fail to strike even the most casual observer. There seems no particularly good reason why the Egyptian ruling class should control more poverty-stricken millions.

If we wish to see justice done to the Sudanese problem, we should hand it over to Uno with the offer that we would continue either singly or jointly to be responsible for its welfare and development. There is little to be lost from such a move, and very much to be gained in an age which professes to abhor any form of imperialism.

L. JAMES

RESIDENT IN GERMANY

I HAVE just spent several months on a special bit of Quaker relief work in a small unbombed health resort left in the British Zone. Lying in a peaceful valley, surrounded by beautifully wooded hills and cornfields, its celebrated Kurpark still very attractive, it seemed much as one had known it seven years ago. True, most of the grass in the park has been ploughed up for potatoes, the houses look shabbier, and the air of gaiety has disappeared, but one is used to that sort of change in England.

The little town has trebled its population since the end of the war, for thousands of refugees from the East pour across, legally and illegally, into the British Zone. They are mostly women, children and old people, who bring just what they can carry with them, and are billeted on the townsfolk. Many of the better houses have been commandeered for the reception of the occupying troops, and lucky indeed are the people who are allowed to take some of their furniture and other property with them when they give over their home.

"Mil. Gov.", as we all call it, is much better liked than the Allied Control Commission. The *niveau* of the personnel is much lower in the latter case, and they are said by the Germans to take little interest either in their work or in the people among whom they are obliged to live. I should imagine few of them attempt to speak German or ever get below the surface. On the other hand, many of the military officers, though often hampered by orders from "above", take their job seriously. I was told that the two most popular men in the place were the twenty-six-year old major-in-charge and the Army Padre.

Our troops are not allowed to buy anything in the shops; but indeed there is nothing to buy! Some paintings and small hand-made bags or other locally produced arts and crafts are seen here and there. Money has little value, and cigarettes are the chief currency. On my arrival I was told that a cigarette was worth seven marks. An Englishwoman who wanted a dress altered was charged by the dressmaker twelve marks, twenty cigarettes and a cake of soap. Another friend could not get her hair shampooed without taking a piece of wood or coal to heat the water. Sewing materials are quite unobtainable. The actual rations are usually to be got, and people who were lucky enough to have a garden or small allotment could supplement with some vegetables or even fruit. The children, on the whole, even the refugees, looked fairly healthy, but one soon noticed the drawn yellow skin and the listlessness of the average adult, especially the old people. When it was suggested that the Youth Club, started by Mil. Gov., should go hiking, it was found that not only had the boys no proper foot gear, but really hard exercise was impossible on their diet.

Everyone realises what a problem these youngsters are. Their foundations are gone, they see no future, they trust hardly anyone, and feel frustrated and bitter. Mere sport clubs do not meet their case. Their background is utterly different from that of young people in England. But many of them are thinking deeply and trying to thrash out their problems. During my stay in the town a neighbouring country pastor organised a week's conference for seventy or eighty young Germans from various places, who came together with some young English relief workers for frank and friendly discussion. It was an experiment immensely worth while, in spite of the difficulties of accommodation and feeding.

I have many personal friends among the townspeople, and had plenty of opportunity to get below the surface and hear what was being thought and said. During a chat, to an old shepherd with his flock of rather mangy sheep on the hillside, he burst out when he realised that I was English, "You know, the English and Americans and the Germans must all stand together against the Russians! It is our only chance!" Useless to argue that neither the Russians nor we want another war; the suspicion of Russia is deeply ingrained.

I found there were three predominant fears. One is fear of Russia. Rumour flies round quickly, and even the movement of a few British troops eastwards starts a report that war is imminent. The second fear is for the political and personal future. With no central government, and no economic security anywhere, they seem to be building, if they build at all, on a quicksand. The third fear is that of starvation and of the coming winter without coal or food. I heard little gratitude expressed for the British efforts to feed the population. This growing bitterness is a very tragic thing. I was often told that when the Allies first came they were honestly regarded as liberators after the long tyranny and the war. It was not the spasmodic looting, but the cold aloofness of the conquerors that caused first disappointment, then bitterness, and later, in some cases, even hatred. For twelve years the whole nation has been shut in a kind of prison. This isolation unfortunately continues, and leads to self-pity and an almost complete loss of sense of proportion. For example, neither Uno nor the Nuremberg trials roused any interest at all. The few controlled newspapers printed in German and appearing twice a week, are often regarded as just another lot of tendentious propaganda. Why, oh, why, in spite of paper shortage, cannot more be done to pour in English newspapers and books? People are hungry and thirsty for reading matter and for the possibility of getting abreast with new scientific, religious or philosophical publications.

We are missing a great opportunity. Every effort should be made to break down the self-centred sense of isolation, which is eating into the hearts of the finest spirits in Germany today. It is just these finest and least blameworthy who take on their own shoulders the corporate guilt of their nation. Amid all the disillusionment, bitterness and despair, there are very many shining examples of courage, devotion to work among their fellow citizens, of hopefulness under overwhelming difficulties. There is a certain lack of civic courage after the years of tyranny, and it is refreshing to find men who can stand up bravely even to the victors. A German friend of mine found that there was great resentment under the surface because, at all the splendid Beethoven and other classical concerts in the town, the British National Anthem was played, so that even in the realm of music they were never allowed to forget their defeat. He went straight to Mil. Gov. and modestly put forward his protest.

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The result was that the National Anthem was quietly dropped out of the programme! He also got back the partial use of the public bathing facilities, which had been entirely taken over for the use of our troops. He was able by swift and wise action to prevent the commandeering of a Home for 150 aged refugees who were to be turned into the street to make room for a fresh batch of troops. The British authorities respect a man like this, and my friend was later entrusted with the leadership of the Youth work and with the organising of a holiday camp for nearly eight hundred specially needy children. I number among my German friends many such fine men and women, and have felt it an honour to be taken into their confidence and allowed to help in ever so small a way in the colossal task of rebuilding their shattered nation.

ELIZABETH F. HOWARD

NEW QUARTETS

THE fact that sonata form and the string quartet both reached maturity in the single person of Haydn forged a link between the two which ought to surprise us more than it does. Considered in the abstract, a string quartet is surely the most polyphonic instrumental medium imaginable: as naturally polyphonic, one would say, as an *a capella* choir. The very appearance of the four players, seated under the lamp as though for a game of bridge, reminds us that they are equal participants in a musical conversation: a conversation which may be learned or playful, casual or profound, but must never turn into a drama, a lecture, or a vehicle for the glorification of any one member at the expense of the rest. The musical forms which best satisfy these conditions are those not of the sonata style, but of polyphony; and it is not surprising that modern composers, following Beethoven's lead in his last period, should have adopted in their own quartets increasingly contrapuntal designs. This practice represents a far more hopeful path in quartet-writing than the late romantic tendency to treat the medium as a mere problem of texture—and not a very interesting one at that, to judge by the fact that so many of them wrote only one quartet apiece.

Reacting, perhaps, from the mass-produced atmosphere of the big public concert, modern composers have shown a welcome revival of interest in the string quartet. Bartók's six constitute the heart of his creative work; Hindemith's last (in E flat, given at the recent I.S.C.M. Festival) ranks among his best compositions; Britten's Second strikes me as quite the most profound and far-reaching of his purely instrumental designs; and it is with a long awaited String Quartet that William Walton is to break, on December 30th, the silence of several years' abstention from serious composition. Within the past fortnight we have heard at the Wigmore Hall two new quartets of the highest interest: Bloch's Second, admirably played by the Grillers; and Michael Tippett's Third, the considerable difficulties of which were thoroughly mastered by the enterprising Zorians, apart from a brief dislocation in the first movement. Both these works have also been given in the Third Programme.

In Bloch's music generally, two strains are evident: on the one hand, the sorrow-laden chant of Hebrew lamentation, that ancient "wailing by the wall" which finds its highest expression in *Schelomo* and the slow movement of the *Piano Quintet*; and on the other hand, a more academic style, representing perhaps a conscious attempt to subdue the violence of his feelings, which was most successful in the *Concerto Grosso* and recently reappeared in the much less interesting *Suite Symphonique*. The new quartet seems to have achieved for the first time a complete synthesis of these two warring elements in Bloch's nature: its emotional vehemence is not contradicted, but reinforced, by its formal concision. It is the music of a solitary thinker, profoundly moved, but no longer rendered hysterical, by the sorry spectacle of human life.

Tippett's quartet has little in common with Bloch's except a preference for polyphonic over orthodox sonata forms. Its over-all design resembles closely that of Bartók's Fifth: five movements, a central scherzo, flanked by two slow movements, and finally (working outwards) by two faster ones. The first movement is a greatly extended fugue; and there were moments during this when I felt that sensation of just "motoring along" which is occasionally produced by the linear counterpoint of a fast movement by Hindemith or Tippett. I quite expect this impression to fade, however, with repetition, for the quartet as a whole seizes one's imagination powerfully enough even at a first hearing; this is especially true of the fourth movement, in which three of the four instruments take it in turn, in three enormous paragraphs, to lash themselves into an extraordinary sort of improvisatorial, impassioned stream of oratory. Throughout the quartet the richness and variety of sheer sound is remarkable; if there has been in the past something casual or esoteric about this composer's manner, here his ideas are presented to the listener in the most definite and even thrilling shape. The quartet marks an advance in accessibility to the public, gained not in the least by "concessions," but solely by an increasing clarity and mastery of style.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THE KING'S PICTURES

THE President of the Royal Academy, whether from a faulty command of the English language, or merely from a lack of response to previous Winter Exhibitions at Burlington House, describes this one as "of unique importance." In fact, as all but the most simple-minded visitors know, the King's Pictures cannot compare in importance with the fabulous riches of the Italian, French and Flemish Exhibitions. But anyone who cares at all for painting will find here a number of delightful and unfamiliar works; anyone interested in history will be regaled with an extraordinary series of portraits; and the comparatively few who concern themselves with changes in taste will discover, with the help of the exemplary catalogue, matter for the most fascinating speculations. Our gratitude must therefore be great, in the first place to the Monarch for his unprecedented loan, and then to all those, headed by Mr. Anthony Blunt, who have selected the exhibits and compiled the catalogue.

If our country has enjoyed an exceptionally happy history, this has been due, at any rate since the reign of Elizabeth, far more to the defects of our Kings than to their abilities. Most fortunately none of the Stuarts or Hanoverians had the genius needed to realise the autocratic ambitions that most of them entertained. The resulting and just contempt for the policies of Charles I, George III and George IV has made historians usually less than fair to them as patrons of art. Charles I was one of the greatest of collectors. A patron of Rubens and Van Dyck, an enthusiast for Titian, he would be gratefully remembered for his superb collection of Italian paintings if the philistine Cromwell had not sold most of these, permanently impoverishing this country for the benefit of Paris, Vienna and Madrid. Charles II recovered a few of the dispersed masterpieces, including a batch presented to him by the Dutch Government. The next royal patron was "poor Fred," to whom the collection owes two Claudes, several Rubenses, and an album of magnificent drawings by Poussin—these last a sign surely that his taste for art was not merely a disguise for ostentation. His son emerges as the purchaser of a large number of eighteenth century Italian paintings, including over fifty by Canaletto, some Dutch pictures, among them the Vermeer which may be thought the finest thing in the whole exhibition, and—again significantly—a superb series of French and Italian drawings. He was a patron also of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Allan Ramsay and Zoffany. "And what mortal ever heard Any good of George the Third?" This epigram would never have been written if its author could have seen this exhibition, for Landor was a passionate lover of painting. George IV indulged lavishly his taste for the Dutch masters—an unexpected taste, for otherwise his career reveals small sympathy with the discreet neatness of a de Hooch, even less with the profundity or devotion of a Rembrandt. To him the collection owes also its finest Rubens, the fascinating Le Nain, some admirable Stubbses and the Lawrences in the Waterloo Chamber. That these four princes had a genuine feeling for art seems evident. But the Prince Consort? This is not so certain, but he bought, and the Queen bought for him, Primitives in the Forties, well ahead of English taste. She acquired also most surprisingly a picture of Federico da Montefeltro. (The early Urbinate School was then entirely out of fashion, and probably the picture was bought because Federico is shown wearing the George.) But her personal taste ran to Frith, Landseer, Winterhalter and Von Angeli—the last, alas, not represented at Burlington House. The parsimonious selection of Victorian pictures is indeed a great disappointment. I was specially looking forward to the painting which, so far as I remember it, staggeringly reveals the Queen, voluminous in unrelieved crape, dumped upon a pony, with John Brown, a loyal retinue of dogs yapping among state papers that litter the Balmoral gravel. The Winterhalters are some consolation: incidentally he makes the Queen a brunette, whereas Wilkie confirms the general opinion that she was fair.

The acquisitions of her successors are not represented, though there are four pictures (all of them old) presented by Queen Mary. It is well known that the present Queen has revived a high tradition in buying pictures by good contemporary artists.

Rich as is the royal collection, it has—because of Cromwell—few pictures showing the greatest painters at the summit of their imaginative power. To the attention of the hurried visitor I would specially recommend a Holbein (25), the Breughel (135), the Fra Angelico (182), the Duccio (183), the Bellini (202), the Tintoretto (207), the unsurpassed Bassano (225), the Caracci (248), the Feti (254), the Gentileschi (267, more probably Spanish), two Rubenses (285 and 289), the Vermeer (305), the de Hooch (309, attribution doubtful), the Rembrandt (333), the Claude (416)—the two others may be equally beautiful, but they are hardly visible for dirt, the Le Nain (425), the larger Canalettos (especially 437, attribution doubtful), the unfinished Gainsborough (478), and the fine Stubbses.

This is not put forward as a list of the "greatest" pictures in the exhibition, which includes authentic works by Titian, an artist on an entirely different scale to Feti or Gainsborough or Stubbs. But the pictures I have mentioned are distinguished by what is called intensity. In them the artists (very various in stature), do more than reveal their mastery: they convey to us the vividness of their response to things either seen or imagined. Does then such a criterion admit none of the English portraits in this splendid display? A definite denial would be rash, in face of Reynolds's Self-portrait (89), his Garrick (92), Gainsborough's Cumberland group (82), Zoffany's Prince Ernst (60), and Lawrence's Pius VII (131). And yet, and yet . . . Charm—look at the Liotard and Gainsborough children—charm or vigour or perspicacity, yes. But "intensity"? I am not so sure.

Finally, a word must be said about the Dutch and later Italian paintings, which—apart from those already mentioned—may not be of special interest to the pictorial equivalent of the general reader. The student will delight in the remarkable examples of a number of Seicento and Settecento, painters that are represented poorly or not at all in the National Gallery. (How instructive, for instance, are the views in tempera by Marco Ricci: here is the Italy of Milors on the Grand Tour, the Italy, complete with picturesque hermits and washerwomen and ruins, that so comprehensibly kept Lord Bristol away, year after year, from his episcopal duties in Ulster.) And then the seventeenth-century paintings from the Low Countries. How little attention most lovers of art now give to any of these apart from Rembrandt, Vermeer and perhaps Ruysdael. No one can be expected to relish Dou: except that he is so skilful, he might be a Royal Academician. But Karel du Jardin, and Teniers the younger (look at 332), W. van de Velde, van der Heyden and Wouverman—how rewarding are their pictures, when you peer into them, what refinement of colour, what delicacy of handling. Let me recommend also the two paintings by Schalcken—a name, I confess, hitherto unknown to me. Goody, how lucky anyone is who cares a lot for pictures!

ROGER MARVELL

RADIO NOTES

In the conditions of modern life, only specialists can be bothered with epic poetry, though many people find time to read the immensely long and bad novels which have taken its place in popular esteem. But there is reason to believe that, if presented in some easily digested form, the great epics of the past may still give considerable pleasure to a large number of people. For example, I find it hard to imagine anybody, gifted with ordinary intelligence and sense of humour, who would not be stimulated and delighted by the Coghill-Potter broadcasts of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The combination of taste in the "translation" and *brio* in the performance placed the first of this series among the very best poetry broadcasts I have had the good fortune to hear. Purists might show, point by point, that Mr. Coghill has taken too great liberties with the original—to the extent, in fact, of displaying Chaucer as a fourteenth-century Crabbe, with a similarly sardonic eye for the absurdities of human behaviour, a similar rather shy sense of beauty, and the same taste for making his rhymes fit with a dry click. But if this impression is in fact a distortion of the poet's original quality, it has the enormous advantage of dispelling the popular illusion that poetry is always sad and difficult, and that the humour and psychological penetration of Chaucer are perceptible only by scholars. It was a brilliant idea, too, to precede the narrative by a short reading in the original pronunciation. Mr. Coghill made a very beautiful and curious thing of this "reconstruction": it sounded like a cross between German and French read with a Scottish accent. I hope we shall be allowed to hear more of this and also that the *Canterbury Tales* will be followed up by other epics treated in the same manner: *Paradise Lost*, for instance, and even *The Faerie Queen*. Stephen Potter's choice of readers was most apt: I cannot recall Cecil Trouncer in better form, and the others were hardly less good.

Dylan Thomas's recollections of a seaside holiday prompted me to wonder why this remarkable poet has never attempted a poetic drama for broadcasting: he would seem to have all the qualities needed. Even more of a feast than his Christmas memories, this latest broadcast had far more the effect of poetry than of prose. A verbal steeplejack, Mr. Thomas scales the dizziest heights of romantic eloquence. Joycean portmanteau words, toppling castles of alliteration, a virtuoso delivery which shirked no risk—this was radio at its purest and a superb justification of its right to be considered as an art in itself.

Much ingenuity was evident in Louis MacNeice's new piece, *The Careerist*, but—it seemed to me—to very little purpose. The dramatic method was pretentious and antiquated—the multiple-narration technique of 1930, given a slight twist—and the effort at allegorical expression completely over-reached itself. This kind of thing simply will not do. Mr. MacNeice is too good a poet, and far too clever a man, to fob himself—and us—off with these junk-shop programmes. *He Had a Date*, written some years back, was a much more successful treatment of the same theme. The confused jumble of *The Careerist* was illumined by flashes of better wisdom, pithily expressed; but to this from the ordered imaginative excellence of *The Dark Tower* the step is too long to be endured—particularly by those of us who have in the past admired Mr. MacNeice's extraordinary gifts.

In view of the fact that the younger generation of today has never heard any of the later operas of Wagner performed in a theatre, I think it might have been wiser to follow the same plan as that adopted for *Man and Superman* and precede the integral *Tristan und Isolde*—perhaps a day or two beforehand—by an introductory talk on the structure of the opera. The third act, in particular, is too elaborate and complex, musically speaking, to be intelligible without some guidance. As for the performance of the opera, I felt too grateful for the opportunity of hearing it all once more, to have any desire to play the Beckmesser; and I believe musical people of my age will generally be disposed to share this view, since we must face the fact that, in the present state of the world, adequate performances of these stupendous operas are simply unattainable. Mr. René Soames sang the shepherd's role correctly, with most agreeable tone; and the orchestral playing was at least tremendously alive, though the *cor anglais* in the third act was kept consistently too much in the background.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

CYRANO DE BERKHAMSTED

The gusto and virtuosity of Rostand's verse made his plays undeniably effective as well as vulgar. But take away the flashy, brassy rhymes, and what is left? A few good situations and a surfeit of images that sparkle like used and rusty sardine-tins. What can have induced the Old Vic to waste Mr. Tyrone Guthrie and Mr. Ralph Richardson on so Danaïd a labour? The translation is pancake-flat, in blankest verse that here and there sprout a few plucky rhymes. The setting and costumes remind one of dear Carl Rosa many happy years ago. The actors deserved sympathy: like kittens, they took a long, long time to drown. The Roxane brought to Richelieu's Paris the authentic fragrance of Mitcham lavender; and one envied Mr. Richardson, for he seemed to be really enjoying the play. But then he is a remarkable actor. So, indeed, is Mr. Alec Guinness, whose enjoyment was less apparent. What a shameful waste of uncommon talents!

THE MOVIES

"Innocent Though Guilty," at the Tatler
"Appointment With Crime," at the Astoria

In recent months the Tatler cinema, which for so long maintained a never-ending "season of Soviet films," has changed or doubled its nature. One week, now, may offer Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*, the next—with ideologies swapped—Mr. Bing Crosby dispensing Catholic realism in *The Bells of St. Mary's*. Today there are empty seats and Russian quality; not quite the highest, but still quality.

Innocent though Guilty is the second film from an Ostrovsky play we have seen during the year. The other, *Without Dowry*, dealt satirically, yet not unfeelingly, with an innocent girl swept away by the intrigue and malice of society: how far the satire exaggerated Ostrovsky's realism I should not care to say, never having met with the original, but the film curiously carried off its mixed emotions. This time—again I have to guess from a general acquaintance with the treasure-house of Ostrovsky—the original seems to have been taken straight, which shows genuine affection for a classic and not merely a tendency to snatch at help from the past. Ostrovsky has even been taken a little bit straight; that is to say, the translation from stage to screen is over-literal. Overlong speeches and alternating close-ups make for a rather slow and packed piece. But it *is* packed, and thank heaven for that! A famous actress comes back to the town where she grew up and loved unhappily: her tumultuous week in the theatre is interlarded by the revival of buried emotions and old faces, by the disentanglement of a painful secret. It is the rather old situation of a son, believed dead, who has grown up as a foundling. We spot this very soon, and are meant, presumably, to spot it. The drama consists in unearthing the whole story and a dozen or so characters, and in foiling the intrigue that may spoil the final confrontation. This may sound, on paper, conventional enough, but in fact not only dramatic skill but a rare insight and irony give it intensity. Emotional intensity—how seldom one meets with that in a film, how eagerly one catches at the moment-to-moment tension which is its substitute! The intensities here derive from character and add up; note such moments as the meeting between the famous actress and a beggar-woman, whom she recognises as her child's nurse and who can't, at first, shaking her head, remember one child among so many. A characteristic touch; it relieves the action of its bias towards melodrama. I should recommend *Innocent Though Guilty* for its dramatic content and its capable acting if for nothing else. But in fact, within a stage framework, the director, Levkoyev, has contrived a well-executed and beautifully furnished piece. As a transcription it is far superior, for example, to *Le Bois Sacré*, which I reviewed last week. But a rather livelier visual invention, I feel, would be necessary to lift this film out of the class of adaptations that owe their interest chiefly to their service.

Then, moving a little farther north along the Charing Cross Road—past the American hosiers and the rubber shops, the Sportsdrome with its curious portrait-gallery (bridegroom 153 years old, lady with sixteen ear-lobes)—one arrives at the English thriller at the Astoria. *Appointment with Crime* is a genuine attempt, at the popular level, to create an English counterpart to the Hollywood gangster legend. Its merits are a certain neatness and speed in execution, bits of slang, glimpses into the oddly assorted criminal world. The repetition of the broken wrists adds a prickling sense of horror to the scene: we are aware all through of those leather-strapped wrists. How far does Mr. William Hartnell come up to his American models? He has nothing like the presence or acting ability of a Bogart, a Henry Fonda; he both over- and under-does his role of ruthlessness, especially at the beginning. But he is by no means without hard looks and personality, and his vicious Cockney whine deserves bringing on. Does the English crook, in tense moments, fall back on the happinesses of trans-atlantic speech—"curtains," for example? Perhaps so. That would seem to make the creation of an English screen gangster even more difficult.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

MR. ATTLEE AND RUSSIA

SIR,—I was shocked by Mr. Attlee's attack on the Soviet Government at the Trades Union Congress last week. He asserted that it prevents intercourse between its peoples and the rest of the world and does not allow them to know what the world is doing and thinking; that it builds up a wall of ignorance and suspicion; and that its Press is guilty of fantastic misrepresentation of the outer world.

I have just been in the U.S.S.R. for the first time since Mr. Attlee and I were there in 1936. My main purpose in this visit was to make arrangements for encouraging intercourse between their people and ourselves. I met with a ready response, and had a good deal of success; I only hope the Premier's untimely words have not set the clock back.

And I saw and heard enough to convince me that Mr. Attlee's assertions were completely wrong. As for "preventing intercourse" and "not allowing them to know," why, these lively and inquisitive people insist on knowing! I talked with writers, scientists, doctors, lawyers, actors, architects, sportsmen, trade unionists, factory directors, collective farmers. They displayed not just a general knowledge of our life and politics, but a detailed and intelligent acquaintance with our housing and town-planning, our music and theatre and literature, our law and wartime legislation, and much more. I wish our Press would tell us as much about *them*.

My Soviet friends and I were able to make preliminary arrangements for visits of Soviet actors, dancers, writers, and others to this country. Indeed, the only difficulty was that their simply appalling losses in the war—so seldom mentioned nowadays in Mr. Attlee's public utterances—have left them so short of personnel that it is not easy for them at present to spare their specialists for visits to foreign countries or to attend all international conferences. I found, equally, that visits by similar British people to the U.S.S.R. will be just as warmly welcomed, as was that already undertaken by Priestley, whose reports are wholly at variance with Mr. Attlee's assertions.

The Prime Minister talks of building a wall of ignorance and suspicion. There certainly is one, but *they* did not build it, and the ignorance is not theirs. It was built in part by the string of anti-Soviet journalists and others who abused the opportunities afforded by personal friendships. It was built, still more, by European and American bosses and politicians playing up the old Red Scare, the "Fear of the Spread of Bolshevism," that favourite weapon of the reactionaries for splitting the working-class and Socialist movement, which Hitler and Goebbels so eagerly adopted and developed. It was built by those

who decided that the "secret" of the atom bomb was safe with Du Pont but not with our Soviet ally; and it was grouted by those Labour M.P.s who clamoured, unrebuked by their leader, for the repudiation of Potsdam—the policy carefully designed to prevent the rebuilding of Germany as an anti-Soviet weapon. There is not yet much material available to convince the Soviet Union that this game will not be tried again.

But Mr. Attlee must know that all the Soviet peoples want is a chance to heal their wounds and reconstruct their ravaged country, and that their only reasons for resisting any proposal of Byrnes, Vandenberg and others are their Socialist convictions that its adoption would lead the world to new disasters. I wish that before delivering this attack—so unhappily timed as an answer to Stalin's statements in the Alexander Werth interview—the Premier had read Ralph Parker's *Soviet Angle*. Parker, who has many Soviet friends, tells us that there is less xenophobia, less tenseness, and more democracy in the U.S.S.R. now than ever before. Mr. Attlee should read him now; and read again his own "International Post-War Settlement," too.

As for the story that the Soviet Press misrepresents the outside world, it just is not so. As I said in the House last week, it is difficult to find in that Press any criticism of British policy or conduct that goes beyond sober factual analysis of economic or political actions or trends; and surely a Socialist Press may write of the capitalist world as it sees it through Socialist eyes. One will not find in their papers one per cent. of the personal abuse and provocative rumours that "our" Press prints all the time about the U.S.S.R.

And what of the Prime Minister's own speech? What would he think—and what would "our" newspapers say—if Stalin went to a big Trade Union gathering and accused him and Bevin and the rest of preventing intercourse between our peoples, of giving a false picture of what is done and thought in the U.S.S.R., of building up ignorance and suspicion, and of letting the Press print streams of fantastic lies about the Soviet Union? He hasn't done it, but it would not be wholly untrue if he did.

What worries me most, is *why* the Prime Minister made such a speech. Is he not picking the wrong enemy? Ought he not to be smashing Toryism and reaction for good and all instead of fighting the Left? Mr. Attlee has the greatest opportunity in history. We can lay the foundations of a Socialist Britain if we don't waste time and energy and confuse counsel by attacking the first Socialist State.

D. N. PRITT

House of Commons.

EXECUTIONS IN GRANADA

SIR,—In view of the fact that in your issue of 5th October I stated that I had heard the shooting of two political prisoners at Granada on 14th September, it is interesting that in *The Times* of 26th October their Madrid correspondent reports that the police there at first denied that any such executions had taken place. When pressed, they later admitted that two men were so shot, but insisted that they had been legally and justly tried and condemned for committing acts of robbery with violence. This is the usual explanation since Republicans in hiding are regarded by the regime as "bandits."

I would like to invite the Spanish authorities to produce evidence that a public trial took place, and to state where these men were arrested, and what were the detailed charges brought against them. A non-political crime must have been pretty severe to justify capital punishment. If the men had been publicly tried would the execution have been denied in the first place? And if they were merely ordinary criminals was there any need to carry out the execution secretly? It is significant that no denial of my story was forthcoming until *The Times* correspondent made inquiries following my repetition of my account of the executions in the foreign affairs debate in Parliament.

These executions, I claim, are typical of political persecution which persists in Franco Spain. These two men I believe were captured in the Sierra Nevada where they were in hiding; they were not publicly tried, if tried at all, and no announcement was made of their execution. When public trials take place, the British Mission is informed and sends observers. The Consulate in Granada was unaware of this case until the shootings took place, but can now of course corroborate my statements. That there was nothing unusual about this tragic incident was brought home to me by the fact that on the day of the executions there was an oppressive air about my hotel; the staff were worried and disorganised. I mentioned this to friends as indicating that they were aware of the shootings and upset by them. They laughed at my innocence and explained that such occurrences were far too usual to cause perturbation among the hotel staff, who were disturbed, not by them, but by a robbery which had taken place a few days earlier in the hotel and for which they were all under suspicion since the culprits had not been found.

ERNEST DAVIES

House of Commons.

BUILDING OUTPUT

SIR,—Critic's description this week of the housing muddle in Coventry only goes to show that Nye Bevan, clever as he is, cannot administer both Health and Housing. So far this is one of Attlee's biggest mistakes. Bevan should be made to choose either one or the other and a good Minister found for the other one.

The right way to control housing is by control of the materials rather than of labour. The Government have complete control of all essential building materials and should allot these to the Local Authorities in proportion to their building programmes and require so many completed houses in return.

There should be no need to allot any materials whatever to private building. Stocks already in the hands of builders, and the inevitable leakages, will be enough to provide for all really necessary repairs, and the large private houses can wait. All houses at present should be built by the Local Authorities, as owners, and by the private builders as contractors to them. But if the private builders will not offer a fair price, then the work may have to be done by administration. This was done during the war; why cannot it be done now?

But of course the necessary incentives should be given to labour, including bonuses for good work, and also piecework on suitable jobs. Why even the Communists, of whom Messrs. Bevin and Attlee are so afraid, allow piecework on their five-year plans!

ENGINEER

COURTS MARTIAL

SIR,—Your article on this subject is misleading. Your correspondent writes "Every . . . member of the court is quite probably sitting on a court martial for the first time and in all probability he will complete his service without ever doing so again." Yet the *Manual of Military Law* states "an officer is not to be detailed to sit on a court martial unless and until his C.O. deems him, after repeated attendences at Courts Martial for instructional purposes, competent to perform so important a duty" (K.R.638). Once properly experienced, an officer is, in my experience, reappointed frequently.

While, owing to a rapid expansion of the forces, experienced officers were not available, permanent, specially experienced presidents were often appointed to tour commands. Where a case develops unforeseen complications the president can adjourn to consult the Judge-Advocate's department.

The right to petition the Confirming Authority is in effect a right of appeal and is a real safeguard against excessive sentences.

The reform of Commanding Officers' summary "Orderly Room" procedure would be more important to the ordinary soldier than any Court Martial reform.

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A C.O.'s powers are limited, but within those limits there is often injustice. The C.O. may be prejudiced and in the privacy of his own orderly room can act with flagrant disregard of all legal principles. Except in the most trivial cases, an accused may elect trial by Court Martial, but must do so *before* hearing his C.O.'s verdict or sentence. The average accused soldier much prefers a quick decision to the delays of a Court Martial. Knowing himself guilty but expecting mitigating circumstances to be allowed for, he may accept his C.O.'s decision, only to be awarded a maximum penalty. If "aggrieved" by his C.O.'s punishment, he may complain to the next senior officer, but in the absence of a defending officer is unlikely to know the proper procedure. Some C.O.s have quite irregularly insisted on the sentence being served before the "complaint" is forwarded, in the well-founded belief that once he has served his sentence the accused will not bother to press his complaint.

A simple and most helpful reform would be the right of the accused to elect trial by Court Martial *after* having his C.O.'s verdict. If the court then had the right of *increasing* as well as decreasing or varying a C.O.'s sentence, no man would elect trial unless he had a genuine sense of grievance.

A C.O.'s reputation for infallibility might suffer if his verdicts were reversed by a Court Martial; but this salutary knowledge would encourage him to scrupulous fairness. R. M. SCOTT

6 Brick Street, Park Lane, W.1.

SEX AND SCIENCE

SIR,—Some years before the outbreak of the last war, J. B. S. Haldane remarked that science had furnished the material basis of our civilization, but that the extraordinary misuse of applied science was a characteristic of our Age. In no field is this truer than the field of sex. We learn how to control conception, and confine the knowledge almost exclusively to the class in which reproduction is most desirable. We discover an effective prophylaxis against venereal disease, and conceal its existence by law.

Learned volumes of enormous length are constantly published on the biological and psychological causes of sexual perversion; yet we continue to imprison homosexuals—the worst conceivable method of dealing with this problem.

Meanwhile, the whole apparatus of science is devoted to bringing unwanted or mentally defective children into the world, and prolonging the lives of the latter.

What happens to them when they get here is recounted in the Report of the Curtis Committee. This shocking document provides a grim footnote to Dr. Norman Haire's letter. There is no method of assessing, with any degree of accuracy, the sum of human misery caused by illegal abortions, and—worse still—unsuccessful attempts at abortion. But there is no longer any excuse for turning a blind eye to the sufferings of homeless or idiot children in this country. We are not, by nature, a cruel people. But hypocrisy, on the scale we habitually indulge in it, involves cruelty; and much unnecessary suffering.

ROBERT BOOTHBY

House of Commons.

SIR,—In your issue dated 19th October, Norman Haire stated "But, in the meantime, while these evils exist what are we to do about undesired and undesirable pregnancies? Those of us who have, for twenty or thirty years, occupied ourselves with this problem, can have no doubt that the majority of people believe that, when an unwanted pregnancy occurs, abortion is justifiable."

Surely a greater knowledge of contraceptive technique together with improved methods would go far to removing the problems of undesired or undesirable pregnancies.

Would it not also be well to bear in mind that a very large proportion of children born into the world were originally unwanted, only to be subsequently wanted in a large number of such cases. Only too often have I seen tragic results to mental health following on the termination of a pregnancy which was regarded as unwanted.

Too often have I been rewarded with heartfelt thanks by the mother, who was persuaded to carry on and have her child, lightly to suggest abortion as an easy solution.

In short, the question is not as simple as some would have us believe. In approaching the problem of abortion and the Unwanted Child many factors must be taken into consideration. Not the least, the mother's immediate reaction to her pregnancy, which is very often of a highly coloured emotional character.

DOCTOR

LONDON, W.1.

MR. OSBORNE AND SOUTHWARK

SIR,—May I reply to Phineas? Is it wrong to get "excited" over the miseries of the poor? In the debate he reports, I showed that in Southwark some 300 people were existing in buildings not fit for pigs to live in.

I pointed out that the Southwark Council had been controlled by the Socialists for 10 years; that it was represented in Parliament by a Socialist Cabinet Minister, and that neither had done anything for these unfortunate people.

I also pointed out that a Socialist Minister of Health had allowed materials and labour, which admittedly are in short supply, to be used for renovating pubs, dance halls, dog tracks, amusement arcades and even West End beauty parlours, but that he thought so little of the miseries of the poor, that he could find neither labour nor materials to help them. Does Phineas not agree this is something to get "excited" about? Why his superior and middle-class reproach?

Two days later, I visited the slums and found the Socialist Borough Council had a number of contractors putting right the worst evils in the place. For 15 months an all-powerful Socialist Minister of Health had done nothing for these people. Within 48 hours of my speech, things were being changed.

House of Commons. CYRIL OSBORNE

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND SPAIN

SIR,—In your report on the Foreign Affairs debate in last week's issue, your correspondent refers to me as being "wholly satisfied" with the Spanish regime. This is so wide of the mark and so much at variance with what I said in the House that I must ask the courtesy of your columns to put right a serious inaccuracy.

In the course of my speech I said: "I want to say quite clearly that in my view the Spanish regime is an entirely undemocratic regime. It is a sort of regime which we would not wish to see in this country, and which we do not wish to see in Spain. I hope and believe that, in due course, the regime in Spain will be changed." And later: "I do not believe in and do not agree with the regime in Spain."

I could give further quotations in the same vein, but surely this is enough to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the statement that I am "wholly satisfied" with the regime. RONALD CHAMBERLAIN

THE POSITION OF SIGNOR TREVES

SIR,—I am not "vehemently anti-Communist," nor might I "in certain circumstances . . . make common cause with the Christian-Democrats," as Mr. Kingsley Martin writes in your issue of October 19th.

I am in favour of complete autonomy of the Italian Socialist Party as an independent factor in Italian political life, and against the manoeuvres of those who would prevent its consolidation with a view of making it a tool in the hands of the Communists. I am also in favour of the Pact of Unity of Action with the C.P., provided it respects the basic and genuine characteristics of the Socialist Party. PAOLO TREVES

Rome, Constituent Assembly.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"A RACE so constituted was predisposed to Christianity, by its gloom, its aversion to sensual and reckless living, its inclination for the serious and sublime." Onlookers do, perhaps, see most of the game: it is Taine, speaking of the Anglo-Saxons.

Francis Quarles, whose name at least is known to everybody, is nowadays perhaps less read than taken as read. It is a pity. His "aversion to sensual and reckless living," his "inclination for the serious and sublime," make him congenial company for these dark and sober times. Besides, there is a great deal more to him than just his Anglo-Saxon predisposition to Christian gloom: he can, oddly enough, write poetry. Pope, in a letter to Bishop Atterbury, called him "a great poet"; Richard Baxter said: "Quarles outshines them all"; Lamb liked him, and voted him "wittier than Wither." An even more unexpected witness, Thoreau, breaks into superlatives: "He uses language as greatly as Shakespeare; and though there is not much straight grain in him, there is plenty of tough, crooked timber."

The toughest, the crookedest, of this timber is to be found in his masterpiece, *Divine Emblems*, which was first published in 1635 and thereafter fairly constantly reissued for the next couple of hundred years, chiefly, it would seem, on the strength of its appeal to the devout. It is a large work, and one highly unusual in form, though deriving directly in this respect from the Latin *Pia Desideria* of the Jesuit, Hermann Hugo, which had appeared eleven years earlier. It consists of five books, each containing fifteen poems of considerable length and in a great variety of metres. In Fuller's phrase, it is "visible poetry, catching the eye and fancy at one draught," since every poem is preluded by a very queer, surrealist engraving of the Emblem or symbolic picture to which the subject-matter of the poem relates. The study of these extraordinary designs is not the least of the pleasures to be derived from reading Quarles. Consider, for example, the one illustrating the favourite text of that "Manichæan Millenarian," Mr. Toobad, of *Nightmare Abbey*: *The devil is come among you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* This exhibits, precariously balanced upon a very small crucifix, a very large bubble on the summit of which sits, surrounded by flames, an exceedingly black and hairy devil, wearing nothing but a crown and a pair of dragon's wings, and having a serpent in his left hand and a trident in his right. Below him, inside the bubble itself, are two pairs of figures: the first group shows an angel who is, not very unwillingly, it seems, having his wings clipped by a pretty lady with a large pair of shears: this is Faith being weakened by Sense. The other couple consists of a stern elderly matron who is flagellating a young woman: Fraud scourging Astræa. All charmingly arbitrary, you perceive: Faith, Sense and Fraud, English and rosy; and pale Astraea hot-foot from Olympus, to represent Justice.

Nor is this all, for following each poem there comes a series of relevant, and often very fine, quotations, mostly from the Fathers, the best-known of which is that magnificent observation of Hugo's concerning the human heart: "The heart is a small thing, but desireth great matters. It is not sufficient for a kite's dinner, yet the whole world is not sufficient for it." And then, finally, there is an epigram by the poet himself, which sums up the matter of the longer poem and the Emblem. It is by these brief four-line epigrams, very mannered, crabbed, and so packed with sense as often to be obscure at a first reading, that Quarles is now chiefly remembered in anthologies.

> My soul, sit thou a patient looker on;
> Judge not the play before the play be done:
> Her plot has many changes; ev'ry day
> Speaks a new scene; the last act crowns the play.

and

> My soul, what's lighter than a feather? Wind.
> Than wind? The fire. And what than fire? The mind.
> What's lighter than the mind? A thought. Than thought?
> This bubble world. What than this bubble? Nought.

now probably his best-known pieces, are both concluding epigrams of this kind. But who knows this description of the New Jerusalem in his poem which follows the text *How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts?*

> Ten thousand millions, and ten thousand more,
> Of angel-measur'd leagues from th' eastern shore
> Of dungeon-earth this glorious palace stands,
> Before whose pearly gates ten thousand bands
> Of armed angels wait, to entertain
> Those purged souls for whom the Lamb was slain;
> Whose guiltless death, and voluntary yielding
> Of whose giv'n life, gave this brave Court her building:
> The lukewarm blood of this dear Lamb, being spilt,
> To rubies turn'd, whereof her posts were built;
> And what dropp'd down in cold and gelid gore
> Did turn rich sapphires, and impav'd her floor:
> The brighter flames, that from his eye-balls ray'd,
> Grew chrysolites, whereof her walls were made:
> The milder glances sparkled on the ground,
> And groundsell'd ev'ry door with diamond;
> But, dying, darted upwards, and did fix
> A battlement of purest sardonyx.
> Her streets with burnish'd gold are paved round;
> Stars lie like pebbles scatter'd on the ground:
> Pearl, mix'd with onyx, and the jasper stone,
> Made gravell'd causeways to be trampled on.
> There shines no sun by day, no moon by night
> The palace glory is the palace light:
> There is no time to measure motion by,
> There time is swallow'd with eternity.

It is a long quotation, but a long quotation is necessary to give the quality of Quarles. The difficulty, indeed, is to refrain from quoting; and since the last passage is in heroic couplets, let us see him as he handles a freer metre:

> The world's a crafty strumpet, most affecting
> And closely following those that most reject her;
> But seeming careless, nicely disrespecting
> And coyly flying those that most affect her.
> If thou be free, she's strange; if strange, she's free:
> Flee, and she follows; follow, and she'll flee:
> Than she there's none more coy, there's none more fond than she.

Here, indeed, we strike upon one of the most remarkable things about the *Emblems*: the range and variety of its metres, often of a kind not generally popular until a much later date, in all of which Quarles is quite at his ease. And, coupled with this extreme metrical ingenuity, we find a number of other good things: liveliness, good sense, wit, humour, an amazing capacity for using common concrete words and images in poetry without a loss of dignity. "O what a crocodilian world is this!" he says; or again, "What mean dull souls, in this high measure To haberdash In earth's base wares." Elsewhere he has the admirable, and surely most modern, phrase: "The sad tautologies of lavish passion." His double and triple epithets, too, remind one in their packed intensity of Hopkins, as when he writes, in a positive passion of hyphenation, "my light-in-vain-expecting eyes", or, referring to his arch-enemy, Cupid, calls him "dull-sprightly-cold-hot fool."

As with all poets, of course, Quarles has his constantly recurring favourite phrases and images: the bubble, toys, trash. He does not approve of pastimes; nor of mirth. Particularly is he averse from mirth.

> What ails the fool to laugh? Does something please
> His vain conceit? Or is't a mere disease?
> Fool, giggle on, and waste thy wanton breath;
> Thy morning laughter breeds an ev'ning death.

The game of bowls, again, annoys him immensely: "Brave pastime," he says of it:

> Brave pastime, readers, to consume that day,
> Which, without pastime, flies too swift away!
> See how they labour; as if day and night
> Were both too short to serve their loose delight:
> See how their curved bodies writhe, and screw
> Such antic shapes as Proteus never knew:
> One raps an oath, another deals a curse;
> He never better bowl'd; this never worse.

How well we know them! How they still "writhe and screw" to-day!

And he is sufficiently up to date to bring in the evils of smoking:

> A new-found vanity, which days of old
> Ne'er knew: a vanity that has beset
> The world, and made more slaves than Mahomet;
> That has condemn'd us to the servile yoke
> Of slavery, and made us slaves to smoke.

It would, however, be quite wrong to leave the impression that Quarles is always inveighing, however amusingly, against what must now seem to us, for the most part, trifles: the querulous note is hushed at times by a higher strain:

> False world, thou ly'st: thou canst not lend
> The least delight:
> Thy favours cannot gain a friend,
> They are so slight:
> Thy morning pleasures make an end
> To please at night:
> Poor are the wants that thou supply'st;
> And yet thou vaunt'st, and yet thou vy'st
> With Heaven! fond earth, thou boast'st; false world, thou ly'st.

And again:

> How long! how long shall these benighted eyes
> Languish in shades, like feeble flies
> Expecting spring? How long shall darkness soil
> The face of earth, and thus beguile
> Our souls of rightful action? When will day
> Begin to dawn, whose new-born ray
> May gild the weathercocks of our devotion,
> And give our unsoul'd souls new motion?
> Sweet Phosphor, bring the day;
> Thy light will fray
> These horrid mists; sweet Phosphor, bring the day.

'Gild the weathercocks of our devotion" true poetry? I think so.

And then, at the end of it all, having read the *Emblems* through and having been greatly persuaded by their author to abjure the worthlessness of the world and all its works, including Cupid, we turn him up in the reference book and we find: "He was twice *m.* and by his first wife had eighteen children." We learn also that at one time he sought by Act of Parliament to erect works for the manufacture of saltpetre (villainous saltpetre!) by a new process; and that, at another, he augmented his income by obtaining a lease in reversion of the impositions on tobacco and tobacco-pipes imported into Ireland. We reflect on his strictures against tobacco; and we sigh. Truly, as in the similar case of Tolstoy, it is clear that, in order to despise the world really efficiently, one must have been of it: which, if you think about it, is logical enough. There is not much, after all, to be said for despising something you haven't tried. And certainly he had tried it, and was not, one feels, insincere in his rejection. Listen!

> She's empty: hark! she sounds: 'tis but a ball
> For fools to play withal:
> The painted film but of a stronger bubble,
> That's lin'd with silken trouble:
> It is a world, whose work and recreation
> Is vanity, and vexation;
> A hag, repair'd with vice-complexion, paint:
> A quest-house of complaint;

It is a saint, a fiend; worse fiend when most a saint. Thus Quarles at the age of forty-three. His path had been quite other than that of Pascal. Born—at Romford in Essex, incidentally—the son of a Clerk to the Royal Kitchen who had risen to be Clerk of the Green Cloth and after that to Surveyor General for Victuals for the Navy under Elizabeth, he had, in his own career, figured very much as man of the world, nourished on sinecure and privilege. He had been cupbearer, at Heidelberg, to Elizabeth of Bohemia; private secretary, at Dublin, to Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh; Chronologer to the City of London. That the final summing-up of this courtier, cavalier, lute-player, law-student, collector of rare books, should be that of Pascal, and well before Pascal's time, is tribute, indeed, to the inclination of the Saxon mind for "the serious and sublime."

Quarles was unfortunate in his wars. The plundering of his books and rare manuscripts by the Parliamentarian forces is said so to have grieved him as to bring about his death. The tercentenary of this event fell on September 8th in the year of D-Day, when most of his admirers were otherwise engaged. His shade extorts this tardy recompense.

MORCHARD BISHOP

THE ANATOMY OF TERRORISM

Thieves in the Night. By ARTHUR KOESTLER. *Macmillan.* 10s. 6d.

The delays of British publishing have made *Thieves in the Night* into a topical book which will be discussed largely in reference to the current Palestine problem. Mr. Koestler tells the story of a Jewish Socialist settlement in Galilee. The life of the settlers and of the neighbouring Arab village and the politics of Jerusalem and London are seen through the eyes of an upper class British Jew, Joseph, who has been converted to Zionism by an unsuccessful love affair with a Gentile, and now works as the community cobbler. The settlement prospers and, in the last chapter, sends out an advance guard to form an offshoot nearby. But, meanwhile, the political situation deteriorates; the Peel Report is rejected and the 1939 White Paper is imminent when the story ends. These political developments force Joseph to abandon his romantic Jewish Socialism, and to join a terrorist group. At this point the book suddenly stops.

Thieves in the Night is not a well constructed novel, and its only plot is the intellectual development of the hero. The characters are types—brilliantly sketched, but still types; and the philosophic argument is illustrated in a series of static scenes. This strengthens the impression that it is a piece of reporting which can fairly be discussed on its merits as a picture of Jewish life in Palestine. On my second reading I barely resisted the temptation to underline inaccuracies and examples of one-sided reporting as though *Thieves in the Night* were a newspaper story or a propaganda pamphlet.

The temptation is all the greater because, considered on this journalistic level, Arthur Koestler is an uncommonly acute reporter. He has packed into this book more of the colour and the smell and the claustrophobic mental atmosphere of Jewish Palestine than any other writer, and his description of the peace-making ceremony in an Arab village, attended by a British party, proves that he is a less merciless anatomiser of the enemy than of his own people. He can feel himself into the Arab, and even his caricatures of the British have a considerable objectivity. But the tragic mixture of love and hate, of pride and contempt, which he feels for his own people transforms objectivity into a mordant self-dissection. Only very rarely, as in the opening chapter, which tells of the first day in the life of the collective, and the first night attack by the Arabs, does the story run fast and clear so that we accept his characters as living people. Elsewhere, the personality of the hero is dominated by that of the author. The crude facts of Palestinian politics drive the story underground and turn a novel into polemics. We begin to argue with Mr. Koestler instead of living in the settlement.

Perhaps, after all, that is what we are intended to do. *Thieves in the Night* is called "The Chronicle of an Experiment." It is the experiment of a Jew, brought suddenly to realise that he is a Jew, who tries to find himself in Jewish nationalism. So he returns to the sacred soil and to the intense inward-looking collective life which is the escape from Gentile hostility offered by the National Home. Koestler himself was a Zionist before he joined the Communist Party. After his break with Communism he went to Palestine and submitted himself to the experiment. There, to judge from this book, he felt, with all the self-conscious heart-searchings of the trained analyst, and of the Jew who is not a complete Jew, first the ecstasy of liberation, then the sense of close confinement and finally the disillusionment of "the political ice age," when the Jewish State is being submerged in Gentile power-politics. Communism for him is a way of life which he has deliberately rejected as evil by a rational act of will. Zionism is a dead end which appeals to a sub-conscious yearning. It is intellectually acceptable as a solution of the Jewish problem, and it satisfies a frustrated demand for submission to a group loyalty.

> Nationalism? Nonsense. . . . Joseph repeated to himself—this earth means something different to us than Croatia means to the Croats or America to the Americans. They are married to their countries; we are searching for a lost bride. We are homesick for a Canaan which was never truly ours. That is why we are always foremost in the race for Utopian and Messianic revolutions, always chasing after a lost paradise. Defeated and bruised, we turn back towards the point in space from which the hunt started. It is the return from delirium to normality and its limitations. A country is the shadow which a nation throws, and for two thousand years we were a nation without a shadow.

No one has expressed the philosophy of Zionism more brilliantly than that. But Koestler knows that his own personality cannot be fulfilled in Palestine. The Hebrew boys, sprung from the native soil, are mercilessly described as clod-hoppers, who possess none of the qualities, good or bad, of the Jew living dangerously among alien peoples. To save himself from the malaise of the Dispersal, and from the extermination camps, the Jew must sacrifice his personality, not to art or literature or science, but to the insignificant struggle of a small people for a barren plot of land in the Middle East. That sacrifice Arthur Koestler cannot make, and his latest book is the chronicle of an experiment which failed, the self-analysis of a spiritual wanderer who prefers the open highway to the dead end with the gates slammed behind him.

This is the only explanation which I can find for the extraordinary contradiction between Koestler's rejection of Communism in *Darkness at Noon* and acceptance of terrorism in *Thieves in the Night*. The hero, enraged by the murder by Arabs of the girl whom he loves but cannot marry, and gradually coming to understand British Middle Eastern policy, decides to join Bauman, the intellectual who has organised a terrorist gang. Their conversation, the climax of the book, concludes:

> "You are a flabby Machiavelli," said Joseph.
>
> "It is the logic of the Ice Age," said Bauman. "We have to use violence and deception to save others from violence and deception."
>
> Joseph gave no answer. Already his momentary elation was followed by a new wave of disgust at choosing that easy way out. But he was too weary to argue about ends and means—for that was what the whole question boiled down to. This was no time for soul searching. Who was he to save his integrity while others had their bodies hacked to pieces? In the logic of the Ice Age, tolerance became a luxury and purity a vice. . . . "Oh, damn it all," he said helplessly; "I wish to God you had let me take part in an action—if only one—then at least I would not have the feeling that it has all been made easy and cheap for me."

This is no doubt an accurate description of the sort of reasoning used by Jewish students who joined the Irgun or the Stern Gang, but it is also the justification for Communism, Fascism and every other philosophy which chooses Joseph's "easy way out." Does Koestler mean that states and world philosophies must reject totalitarianism, but that a small people, deprived of its state, is justified in using terrorism in defence against an empire? Has he accepted the casuistry of "the British intern us without charge. That justifies us in kidnapping them"? The answer, I think, explains the flaw in *Thieves in the Night*. It is written on two levels—political reporting and spiritual self-analysis; and the two levels do not fuse. As a politician and as a Jew, Koestler is convinced that the terrorists who follow the example of the Irish and the Boers have chosen the correct tactics in dealing with Britain, and

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November 11

JONATHAN CAPE

that Doctor Weizmann has chosen the wrong ones. But in analysing his own mental struggle, and indeed the universal struggle in every Jewish mind, he is driven to the conclusion that terrorism is a dead end. Bauman, who came to Palestine to escape from persecution, and to help to build a free society, is transformed into a nihilist. Joseph, who sees that the argument is fallacious, still accepts the view that "The revolver is the new Esperanto. Everybody understands it from Shanghai to Madrid." The *reductio ad absurdum* is complete.

As a work of art *Thieves in the Night* fails because emotion is recollected in agony, and doubt in self-torture. But it is a magnificent failure, an immensely exciting and an important book, which is worth a dozen minor literary successes.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

UNSPOTTED MAJESTY

Queen Adelaide. By MARY HOPKIRK. *John Murray.* 15*s.*

The "debunkers" in biography have for long had the field more or less to themselves; and a reaction seems timely. But must the pendulum swing right back to the panegyric? Have we now reached the stage of "re-bunking"? It may be so; and Mrs. Hopkirk may be in the van of the chivalrous rehabilitators. But she could hardly have chosen a more unpromising person to rehabilitate than Queen Adelaide, the wife of William IV.

So faint a rustle did the name of Adelaide make in the pages of history that it is remembered if at all, as the capital of South Australia. Let us recall the outline of her dim career. She was the plain elder daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, who at the age of 26 received her first offer of marriage by post from the Duke of Clarence—and accepted it. Clarence was twice her age, the father of a dozen illegitimate children by Dorothy Jordan, had just been refused by another German Princess; and she had never set eyes on him. Yet this incongruous couple achieved an apparently successful marriage, except for the main object of their union—the procreation of an heir to the thrones of England and of Hanover. The Duchess of Clarence indeed gave birth to four children. But the first died at birth, the second survived only for three months, and the last two were born dead. In 1830, the couple moved house from Bushey to Windsor Castle, and became King and Queen of England and Hanover. Queen Adelaide was never popular during her reign. During the Reform Bill agitation the public suspected her of influencing the King against Reform; and she never could live down the suspicion of foreign interference in British politics—any more than the Prince Consort could, twenty years later. On William IV's death she retired to Bushey, and died almost unnoticed in 1849.

Under Mrs. Hopkirk's guidance Queen Adelaide now blossoms out as a kind, graceful lady, a loyal and devoted wife, a disappointed mother always aching with a thwarted love for children, an influence on everyone for good—in fact, a noble nature whose true worth has never been appreciated. Is this picture due to the authoress's perspicacity—or an optical illusion? To support her point of view Mrs. Hopkirk has searched the ample archives of the period for information. Her pages are packed with insipid details of events in the Court Circular. Every complimentary reference to Queen Adelaide is naturally quoted. And the uncouth figure of William IV has been given a brush-up to fit him for his role in this tableau of domestic bliss. According to Mrs. Hopkirk he too "has never been sufficiently appreciated"—and she proceeds to remedy the defect with some exquisite conjectures of his state of mind on his wedding night. It is worth recording some extracts:

> There was some indefinable loveliness about this girl which made him afraid of her. He had never felt any reverence for a woman before . . .
>
> He hoped she wasn't as afraid of him as he was of her. She appeared so wistful and trusting, and had placed herself so irrevocably in his hands. Hitherto his sole interest in her had been her ability to give him an heir. He felt a brute. . . .
>
> She looked very pretty, he thought, as she stood, a fragile, scared little figure, silhouetted against the candle-lit window. . . .
>
> Only to his bride on that July night was it ever revealed that William could be chivalrous and tender. . . .

Is this "Our Billy," as Creevey called him? If so, it can indeed have been only to his bride he was ever revealed—and she was not Mrs. Hopkirk.

When it comes to Adelaide's good influence over her husband Mrs. Hopkirk's enthusiasm lands her in a dilemma. If we are to believe, as suggested, that the influence was in constant operation, then the Queen's unpopularity as the opponent of all Reform was justified. For in politics there is no question but that Adelaide was a crusted Tory: she liked to see herself as a Marie Antoinette on the way to the scaffold in the coming Revolution. But if William never consulted his wife on matters of State—as on good authority we know he never did—then what becomes of Mrs. Hopkirk's carefully worked-up portrait of an invaluable helpmate? Into such a quandary any biographer may fall, who tries to prove too much on too little evidence: the truth being that Adelaide had a highly beneficial influence on William's manners—though even she could not prevent him spitting out of his coach at the crowd—but absolutely none on his politics.

Besides her husband there was another dominant figure in Queen Adelaide's life, whose relation with her has always been somewhat of a mystery. Has Mrs. Hopkirk unearthed anything new to tell us about Lord Howe? Lord Howe was appointed Chamberlain to the Queen on her accession; and remained in that position, except for a short interval when he resigned for political reasons, until her death. He was four years younger than the Queen, a married man, with a remarkably handsome wife and a string of children; but his assiduous attentions to his Royal mistress ("he is like a boy in love," says Greville) soon set tongues wagging at Court. In 1835 a false rumour got into the newspapers that the Queen was pregnant. When William IV read it, he ejaculated "Damned stuff." Lord Alvanley proposed—though you will not find it in Mrs. Hopkirk's chaste pages—that the psalm, "Lord Howe, wonderful are thy works" should be sung. But this was meant only as a joke. The Court could not make head or tail of Howe's infatuation, but all agreed that his intimacy with the Queen was platonic.

Mrs. Hopkirk accepts this verdict apparently. "Nothing has ever come to light suggesting that either of them acted incompatibly with their honour" is the way she words it. But later, after the death of Lady Howe and William IV, she seems to think that Adelaide expected a proposal from her Chamberlain. At least, when Lord Howe did contract a second marriage with a handsome young woman, Mrs. Hopkirk bursts out: "Any one but Adelaide would have been furiously angry"; although she quotes nothing to justify such a feminine explosion.

Indeed, *Queen Adelaide*, laboriously compiled as it is from all contemporary sources of information, is stultified as a biography, not by the careless misplacement of dates and persons—culpable though that is—not even by the stream of trivialities it includes, but by Mrs. Hopkirk's deliberate suppression of the most striking

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feature of her heroine. The Queen was repellently ugly. The State portrait by Sir William Beachey does not do her justice; it does her mercy. She had a fearful complexion, due to an affliction of spots; for a timid woman, continuously exposed to the public gaze, it must have been the bane of her life. Here was a ready-made subject for pathos, had the sympathetic authoress been content to portray, and not wished to embellish. Behind all the courtly flattery, the "woman truly great," the "loving heart," the "lovely hands," the "pretty silhouette," we hear the grim voice of Greville muttering terrible words—words that Mrs. Hopkirk could never bring herself to print—"this dreadful spotted Majesty."

RALPH PARTRIDGE

NEW JERSEY NERO

Alexander Woollcott. By SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS. *Hamish Hamilton.* 12s. 6d.

The Letters of Alexander Woollcott. Edited by BEATRICE KAUFMAN and JOSEPH HENNESSEY. *Cassell.* 12s. 6d.

It was Edna Ferber who, after she was once insulted by Woollcott, referred to him as "this New Jersey Nero who mistakes his pinafore for a toga." The description was not inapt, for the subject of both these books seems never quite to have matured. He never outgrew his peculiarly childish kind of egotism, and to the end of his days could only reply in terms of gratuitous invective to anyone who was rash enough to cross swords with him. Despite these unpleasing characteristics Woollcott is referred to as "the very type of civilised American." Perhaps he was; that is if one can accept as "civilised" a man who lacked all social grace and manners.

It is easy to account for Woollcott's oddities. He was almost a psychologist's textbook case; glandular trouble had made him sexually impotent and left him grotesquely fat. His particular method of compensation was to get in his own blow first; to be thoroughly insulting before his victim had a chance to display his normality. It is not strange that few of even his intimate friendships survived this treatment.

What is much more difficult to account for is the undoubted esteem with which Woollcott is regarded in American literary circles. He published no books, other than one or two collections of newspaper articles; and even these, according to his biographer, were often not original. He seems to have had immense influence as a critic; we are told that a word from him could make or break a book. This again is odd, for the only examples of his criticism noted by Mr. Adams shows his likes and dislikes to have been dictated entirely by emotion, as indeed were his notices in earlier days when he was a dramatic critic.

Woollcott was one of the founders of the so-called "Round Table," a collection of literary figures whose habit it was to lunch together weekly. There was nothing unusual in this, but the luncheons took place in the public dining room of the Algonquin Hotel, and it was the amiable custom of the members to conduct their conversation almost in shouts so that their *bon mots* might be overheard by the uninitiated *hoi polloi* at the adjoining tables. Not unnaturally (and as the members hoped) the Algonquin became one of the sights of New York, and although the club no longer exists it is apparently still considered an honour to be given a seat at the original table. Since it is impossible to imagine the existence of such a "club" in England, one begins to understand why so many Americans think us old-fashioned.

Behind all this fantastic exhibitionism there was another side to Woollcott's character, and it would give a biased picture of him if one failed to note his many kindnesses. He retained, for instance, a passionate fondness for the college where he was educated, and in his later years made it possible for a number of impecunious youngsters to follow in his footsteps at Hamilton, where his ashes are now buried. Besides, he did a great deal of voluntary work for the "Seeing Eye," an organisation which provides the blind with dogs specially trained to lead them in the streets.

Long before America entered the war Woollcott started campaigning for the Allies. He was so convinced of the justice of our cause that rather than submit to the request of his sponsors, to make no slighting references to the Nazis, he refused to continue his extremely profitable weekly broadcasts. For these he had been in the habit of receiving $3,500 a time. He was already a sick man, but he gladly came over to England to do a series of talks on Anglo-American co-operation, and for the fees normally paid to broadcasters in this country.

I have recently listened to a play-back of one of these wartime broadcasts, and there is no doubt that Woollcott was a superb performer. He had the supreme broadcaster's trick of keeping his technique completely concealed; even though one knows that he is reading from a script, it is impossible to believe that he is not talking without a note. This is, of course, a trick; but it is one that few of even the best broadcasters in this country have mastered.

As for the rest, you must read Mr. Adams and decide for yourself. His book is fascinating; but it is the kind of fascination that is slightly tinged with horror. The "Letters" should be read after the biography, since they show only one side of his character.

He wrote angry, cutting, and sometimes cruel letters, but none of them is included for the reason that the editors did not receive any. Certainly they exist, but they were withheld by their recipients either because the fundamental relationship with Woollcott was good enough to blot out whatever emotion the letters had originally aroused, or because the attack was so vitriolic that they were unwilling to see it published.

JOHN MORRIS

FRENCH TRANSITIONS

France Between the Republics. By DOROTHY M. PICKLES. *Contact Publications*, 10s.

Democracy in France: The Third Republic. By DAVID THOMSON. *Oxford University Press*, 10s. 6d.

Mrs. Pickles deserves high praise and gratitude for having written a lucid and sympathetic book which covers the difficult transitional period in France from the death of the Third Republic to November, 1945. Only devoted and patient research can have made it possible to give the reader such a clear picture of Pétain's France, of the resistance movement, of the provisional government in Algiers, and finally of the political and social situation after the liberation. Mrs. Pickles knows France intimately, not only from books, and she paints her picture "not as it looked from this side of the Channel, but as it looked to the French." The interesting volume is perhaps somewhat marred by Mrs. Pickles' anti-Communist bias. The historian, if he ventures to enter the field of contemporary history, must at least attempt to stand above parties. Nor does it seem that Mrs. Pickles has given enough thought to the emergence of M.R.P., France's new Catholic Progressive Party. The advent of M.R.P. is not just an "election surprise." The history of French liberal Catholicism is long and complex. It cannot be understood by a conventional approach to French politics.

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BASIL BLACKWELL

Dr. Thomson's book is more ambitious than Mrs. Pickles' study, though considerably less well-written. He shares with Mrs. Pickles the anti-Communist bias. To Dr. Thomson Communism is a "disruptive force" which is presumably not much different from Mr. Churchill's "fifth column." Nor is Dr. Thomson more elaborate on the significance of M.R.P.:

> The surprising (!) gains of the hitherto small M.R.P. reflected partly the support of millions of French people for General de Gaulle and the Catholic-resistance movements which had been headed by M. Georges Bidault, and partly, too, the exact distance to the Left which the majority of the peasants and the more conservative-minded elements in France were prepared to go.

Perhaps only the forthcoming elections for a French Parliament will show to what extent the new Catholic party may be the expression and integration of a deep-seated structural change of the French political climate. The younger generation of Frenchmen and women, so far as they are not Communists, may have voted M.R.P., because they long for a new spiritual orientation which the older parties failed to give.

Dr. Thomson's book is competent and well-informed. The chapter in which he analyses the class bases of French politics, and also the chapter in which he describes "the democratic instrument" show wide reading and a fine grasp of essentials. Yet the first chapter of the volume which attempts to indicate the ideological background of the Third Republic suffers somewhat from over-condensation. The pages which deal with the history of France from 1870 to the birth of the Fourth Republic cannot supersede Professor Brogan's well-known book on *The Development of Modern France*, nor Mrs. Pickles' more sympathetic study.

Dr. Thomson realises "the defensive, distrustful individualism of French democracy, the suspicion of all authority and the hatred of all privilege," but he makes no attempt at explaining this sociological phenomenon. Perhaps such an explanation is impossible within the framework of a study which isolates "democracy" from its historical antecedents. It would also be difficult, if not impossible, to understand British democracy without considering its *earliest* beginnings.

Political temperaments or characters are older than 150 years. Structural analysis must probe deeper, if it wants to avoid however well-informed superficiality.

J. P. MAYER

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

WAGNER: *Die Walküre*, Act 3. Helen Traubel and Herbert Janssen, with Vocal Ensemble of the Metropolitan Opera and the Philharmonic Symphony Orch. of New York cond. Rodzinski (Col. LX955-62).

WALTON: *Viola Concerto*. William Primrose with Philharmonia Orch. cond. Walton (H.M.V. DB6309-11).

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 104 in D* ("*London.*"). Philharmonia Orch. cond. Issay Dobrowen (H.M.V. C3515-7).

BACH: *Concerto for Two Violins in D minor*. Arthur Grumiaux and Jean Pougnet, with Philharmonia Orch. cond. Süsskind (Col. DX1276-7).

BACH: *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F*. Boyd Neel String Orch. with G. Eskdale (Trumpet), A. Cleghorn (Flute), F. Grinke (Violin), E. Rothwell (Oboe). Cond. Boyd Neel. (Decca K1550-1).

BERLIOZ: *Overture: Carnaval Romain*. London Philharmonic Orch. cond. de Sabata (Decca K1552).

BEETHOVEN: *Overture: Egmont*. Philharmonia Orch. cond. Galliera (Col. DX1273).

RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF: *Overture: May Night*. London Philharmonic Orch. cond. Beecham (H.M.V. DB6308).

VERDI: *Overture: La Forza del Destino*. N.B.C. Symphony Orch. cond. Toscanini (H.M.V. DB6314).

GERMAN: *Welsh Rhapsody*. City of Birmingham Orch. cond. Weldon (Col. DX1274-5).

BARTOK: *String Quartet No. 5*. Hungarian Quartet (H.M.V. C3511-4).

FRANKEL: *Sonata for Violin op. 13*. Max Rostal (Decca K1178-9).

RACHMANINOFF: *Preludes in G minor (op. 23, No. 5) and G major (op 32, No. 5)*. Cyril Smith (Col. DX 1279).

PUCCINI: *La Tosca*: "Strange harmony of Contrasts," and "When the stars were brightly shining." John McHugh, with Philharmonia Orch. cond. Braithwaite (Col. DB2234).

CACCINI: *Amarilli*, and

DONAUDY: *O del mio amato ben*. Gigli with Orch. cond. Collingwood (H.M.V. DB6313).

DUPARC: *L'Invitation au Voyage* and *Elégie*. Bernac acc. Poulenc (H.M.V. DB6312).

Those who were lucky enough to acquire, and wise enough to keep, the recordings of Acts 1 and 2 of *Die Walküre*, which have been issued over the last ten years, can now congratulate themselves on possessing the opera almost complete (there are a few longish cuts in Act 2). But to play the whole thing at a stretch requires some startling adjustments on our part, for not only has recording become "bigger" (if not always better) but the quality of singing in general appears to have declined. In fact, to play the original selections from Act 3, with Lœider and Schorr, is, despite some dimness in the orchestral part, the best way to get out of conceit with the new set. It is not that Mme Traubel is inadequate, nor that Herbert Janssen fails to bring to the part of Wotan a most impressive tenderness and severity; but there is a hell-for-leather quality, a crudeness, about the whole performance, which compares ill with one's memories of the Twenties and Thirties. It would be a pity if young people who have never heard *The Ring* in a theatre, were to jump to the conclusions suggested by this issue. Competent, however, it undoubtedly is, though some people may object to the radio device of placing the *Walküren* at varying distances from the microphone, so as to produce a visual impression. The orchestral playing is vigorous, though seldom sweet in tone, and the balance on the whole good; but we could have done with more bass.

The new set of Walton's *Viola Concerto* is most disappointing. I had expected much—indeed everything—from William Primrose in this lovely work, but although his technical ease is astonishing and his tone as round as a water-melon, he misses the point of the first movement and its corollary, the epilogue. It is true that in the second movement he triumphs: I have never heard this malicious scherzo played with more diabolical energy and point. At these moments the violist seems to be playing with a rapier. But Walton can do this kind of thing on his head; the elegiac poetry, which raises the *Viola Concerto* into the front rank of modern music, is conspicuously absent from this performance. The whole work is flatly over-recorded and lacking in orchestral perspective. Those who possess the old Decca set are strongly advised to think more than twice before rejecting it in favour of this one.

The companies seem firmly convinced that, if an issue is more than a year old, the public will no longer want to buy it, however good it may be. But it is quite usual for Supply to under-rate the intelligence of Demand, and I believe this is a case of it. The new recording of the "London" Symphony is very rowdy; but the performance is full of life and feeling, and Issay Dobrowen (an experienced conductor one is glad to welcome here) works wonders with the strings, in matters of consort and attack. But the Beecham set of this symphony is not out-of-date, in any sense, and as it is still obtainable one cannot help wishing that Mr. Dobrowen's high gifts had been enlisted in favour of one of the innumerable

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PROGRESS OF REHABILITATION

THE annual general meeting of Harrisons & Crosfield, Ltd., was held on Oct. 29th in London.

Mr. H. Eric Miller (the chairman) gave an account of the encouraging progress made towards recovery in the eastern territories freed from Japanese occupation.

"Liberated Malaya," he said, "was under British military administration until the middle of March, 1946, and it was a relief when the civil administration, manned by officers who knew the country, was able to take over again. You will have seen in the Press from time to time reports from individual plantation companies showing that by and large, with a few unlucky exceptions, the estates have come through without irretrievable damage. The estates in the H and C Group under M.R.E.O.C. have got into their stride again much more rapidly than anyone ventured to forecast.

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The report was adopted and a final dividend of 12½ per cent on the Deferred Ordinary Stock and a special bonus of 5 per cent were approved.

Haydn symphonies which remain obstinately unrecorded.

On the other hand, it certainly was time for a new issue of Bach's *Concerto for Two Violins*. The Kreisler-Zymbalist performance remains unrivalled for sheer beauty, but the recording (with string quartet instead of orchestra) has become definitely old-fashioned. The Grumiaux-Pougnet set can be confidently recommended, although I do not feel the soloists have quite overcome the problem set by the slow movement, in which the rhythmical flow, unvarying as it is, easily becomes pedestrian, thus losing its lyrical quality. The two violinists are beautifully matched and the recording of the string tone is more like the real thing than can be said of many recordings today, however confident the propaganda.

In recording a concerto where the solo part consists of a group, the difficulty in isolating the group is considerable, since the visual effect is absent. The Brandenburg No. 2 poses this problem in an acute form, and in general it has been solved in the new issue by a careful "terracing" of the dynamics. The solo parts are most beautifully played and the performance on the whole is a model of discretion, though stridency in the *tutti* is not always avoided.

De Sabata's interpretation of the *Carnaval Romain* has become a byword for demonic vitality, and Decca have obviously been at great pains to reproduce the galvanic thrills of his performance. I can well imagine this disc will cause a sensation—by the sheer brilliance of the orchestral range and especially by the fidelity of the percussion. But when the glittering procession is over, a doubt subsists. Is the tone in the louder passages ever *agreeable?* In their pardonable excitement over the improved range of frequencies, the companies tend, I feel, to forget that gramophones are usually listened to, not in large halls, but in rooms of modest size. I do not suggest that the other extant recording of this overture (by Beecham) is preferable, for his conception is not nearly so dramatic, and the slower over-all tempo is not an advantage; but the quality of the sound is much easier on the ear.

The same criticism applies to the latest *Egmont*. Comparison with the classic record by Weingartner reveals a similar outlook on the music: Alceo Galliera has, rightly, not attempted to lighten the sombreness of this aggressive masterpiece. The constant *sforzandi* in which it abounds are very well managed—pugnacious yet well within the margin of reproductive ability. The climaxes—like those of the Berlioz and Verdi overtures—are grossly over-recorded but in other respects the issue is a fine one. Had it been recorded on the same level as the "May Night," I should have had no fault to find with it. This overture to one of Rimsky-Korsakoff's earliest operas is fresh, charming and full of poetic feeling. The recording is most satisfactory, sharply defined yet always pleasant in tone.

Toscanini recordings have improved a lot recently and the latest to reach us has great qualities. The overture to *La Forza del Destino* promises more than the opera fulfils: it has all Verdi's incomparable imaginative power and melodic expressiveness—especially in the first four minutes, after which it degenerates in musical interest. The maestro takes it at a very brisk pace, and the engineers have managed his sudden orchestral ferocities more successfully than usual.

Edward German's *Welsh Rhapsody* is a curious example of aesthetic naïvety. Three-quarters of this piece are in the best tradition of English (*i.e.* Brahmsian) symphonic writing before the influences of Strauss, Debussy and Scriabine—so ill-suited to mate with our national genius—had created yesterday's confusion. Most of this Rhapsody is delightful—tuneful, well-written, unpretentious, and lucidly orchestrated. And then we realise, with horror, that the composer has all this time been working up to an apotheosis of the March of the "Men of Harlech"! The attempt to employ the phrases of this four-square tune "symphonically" are of course nugatory; and three minutes of tiddley-om-*pom-POM!* are enough to ruin the memory of what has gone before. This folly is the more enraging since both performance and recording are particularly good.

Bartok's *Fifth Quartet* was written at what now seems a particularly stressful period of his musical career: the years around 1930. It was for him a period of experiment with complicated rhythmical patterns, and with a deliberately rebarbative harmonic scheme that wrings the last drop of significance from the major and minor second, the augmented fourth and major seventh. It is in this severe idiom that the *Fifth Quartet* is couched; an idiom in which common chords (and they sometimes occur) play a part exactly opposite to that which they play in classical and romantic harmony: instead of slackening the tension, they heighten it. All this is far from easy to get accustomed to; but the effort is abundantly worth while, for Bartok was a great master, not only of composition, but of emotional expression. As in the poems of Chapman or Scève, the imagery comes from the high narrow ridge that runs between the sublime and the ridiculous, between poetry and bathos. I shall not pretend that I *enjoy* the manner of this quartet as much as the composer's earlier manner, or as the works of the wonderful final period, in which he was re-discovering the romanticism of youth; but I greatly admire it and believe that it is fundamentally sound. You will get the sense of this quartet—the counterpoint and disposition of parts—much more quickly if you begin by following it with a score (easily obtainable). The performance of this horribly tricky music is so consummate as to leave one agape, and the recording is very faithful.

To write for an unaccompanied stringed instrument is a task requiring either great inventiveness, or great technical ingenuity (Reger, Hindemith), or both (Bach, Bartok). Mr. Frankel fails to pass these tests, though the quality of his thought suggests a musician of considerable refinement. The sonata is extremely well played. Mr. Cyril Smith might have done justice to the hackneyed "March of the Cossacks," if his accentuation had been a little less violent; but in the G Major Prelude his whole conception seems to me at fault. The *rubato* is so excessive that, time and

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